IAAPA NEWS

How Water Parks Cater to Dogs p. 52

Steps to Stronger and More Sustainable Purchasing Power p. 59

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JULY/AUGUST 2024

Portals to Creativity

Inside Meow Wolf's own genre of attraction

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Cover Story | page 42

Portals to Creativity

Inside Meow Wolf's own genre of attraction

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MEOW WOLF

OCEAN PARK HONG KONG

48 Haute Cuisine

How attractions ensure creative F&B enhances their message—and the guest experience

THE WAGINGTON

52 Woof It Up!

How water parks and community pools provide a paws-itive end-of-season experience for dogs and their owners

INSIDE | JULY/AUGUST 2024

CANADA'S WONDERLAND

ASSOCIATION NEWS AND BENEFITS

EXPO PREVIEW

Discover More at IAAPA Expo Europe 2024 ... *30*

EVENT RECAPS

IAAPA Summit 2024 + Latin American Amusement Expo Crafts Connections ... *34*

Attendees Explore Leisure Market Potential at IAAPA EMEA Spring Summit ... *35*

IAAPA FOUNDATION

IAAPA Foundation Supporter Shares Motivations ... *36*

ADVOCACY

IAAPA Advocates for Sustainable Tourism at Rhodes Forum in Greece ... *38*

MEMBER BENEFITS

Unlock the Value of IAAPA Membership ... *39*

CALENDAR ... *40*

DEPARTMENTS

AD INDEX ... *62*

MIC DROP ... *64*

JULY/AUGUST 2024
VOLUME XXXIX • ISSUE 4

Funworld is a member benefit of IAAPA, the global association for the attractions industry.

IAAPA NEWS

Visit **IAAPA.org/News** for leading industry news in the IAAPA News Hub.

Launch

MUSEUMS & SCIENCE CENTERS
Merging Summertime Learning with Fun ... *7*

DISPATCH ... *10*

REGIONAL UPDATES ... *12*

IAAPA RESEARCH ... *19*

IMMERSIVE EXPERIENCES
Harry Potter's Fantastic Beasts Create After Dark Attraction in Singapore ... *20*

EVENT EVOLUTION
Canada's National Treasure... *21*

IAAPA SAFETY CORNER
Championing Safety... *22*

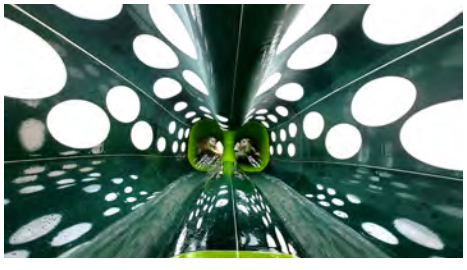
WHAT WORKS
Creating Raving Fans Through the Guest Experience ... *23*

MOVERS AND SHAKERS ... *24*

WHAT'S NEW ... *25*

PEOPLE OF THE ATTRACTIONS
Striking Gold with Pinsetting Equipment ... *26*

BUSINESS RESOURCES


PROSLIDE TECHNOLOGY

56 One Speed Does Not Fit All
Exploring the use of variable speed systems in water parks

VANCOUVER AQUARIUM

59 Sustainable Purchasing
Commitment to sustainable procurement brings benefits

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Contact Ren Steyn on r.steyn@teamaxess.com

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SPLISH SPLASH WATER PARK

Rope Drop

The Dog Days of Summer

A pack of huskies makes a splash at Morey's Piers and Water Parks in New Jersey. The attraction is one of several facilities that set aside a day for dog owners to make a splash with their pooch. Americans spent $136.8 billion on their pets in 2022, according to the American Pet Products Association. How can attractions capture this spending power? Turn to p. 52.

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Funworld (ISSN 08923752; mailed in Canada under IPM #0902179) is published bimonthly by IAAPA, 4155 West Taft Vineland Road, Orlando, FL 32837; phone: +1 321-319-7600. Periodicals postage paid at Orlando, FL, and additional offices.

The purpose, function, and nonprofit status of this organization have not changed during the preceding 12 months.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Funworld, 4155 West Taft Vineland Road, Orlando, FL 32837. ©2024 IAAPA. No material or part thereof may be reproduced or printed without the written consent of IAAPA. Ride-along may be enclosed.

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Launch

ORLANDO SCIENCE CENTER

Two summer camp participants move liquid into a test tube during an activity at the Orlando Science Center.

MUSEUMS & SCIENCE CENTERS

Merging Summertime Learning with Fun

Attractions engage children with summer camp programs

by Arthur Levine

WHEN THE SCHOOL YEAR ENDS, children don't have to take a vacation from learning and socialization. Many museums help fill the summertime gap with camp programs that leverage their resources. The camps help museums develop strong relationships with their youngest visitors and their families, reinforce their missions, and generate additional revenue.

Welcoming as many as 350 campers each week over the course of 11 weeks, the Orlando Science Center in Florida has an especially large summer camp program. Sessions are broken up by age and range from preschool to children entering grade six. Each weeklong session includes 20 to 25 campers per class and focuses on a STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) topic, such as Digging for Dinos or Fairground Physics.

The fee for the camp sessions is $350 for preschool through fourth grade and $450 for fifth and sixth graders. The center offers discounted rates for members, campers who attend multiple weeks, and families that enroll more than one child. "The center's mission is 'Inspire science learning for life.' That's really at the core of what our camp is about. Kids can gain skills and pursue interests in science," says Emily Duguid, the organization's vice president of education. "Most of all, we want the children to have fun. It is camp after all. Our goal is to make science engaging and fun."

To staff the camp, the Orlando Science Center deploys its 14 full-time, year-round educators and supplements them with 10 seasonal instructors, most of whom are teachers on summer break. The facility also hires 40 college students to serve as counselors and brings on 100 volunteers—typically high school students. Duguid says the volunteer positions are coveted, and the spots fill up quickly. →

ORLANDO SCIENCE CENTER

In line with the Orlando Science Center's commitment to make science engaging and fun for campers, an instructor and three children experiment with slime.

To develop the schedule and curriculum, Duguid and her team meet to review what sessions were popular the previous year and discuss what science topics are currently trending. For example, the center introduced a Minecraft camping session a few years ago when the game was all the rage, but it was dropped last year when interest waned. Right now, anything Lego-related, such as a Lego robotics session, is perennially popular—as is computer coding, which children can learn about in a new session that explores game design and 3D animation. Another new session, which is geared toward fifth and sixth graders, is focused on conservation and sustainability and is based on the center's new exhibit, "Life."

"As a nonprofit, camp is an important source of our revenue," Duguid says. "It helps support us throughout the year."

The Explore It Summer Camp at Boston Children's Museum is newer and considerably smaller than the program in Orlando. Launched in 2021 to provide social engagement for children as well as childcare for parents during the COVID-19 pandemic, the six-week camp serves 30 children each week. While the museum's audience is infants up to about the age of 9, the camp targets kids entering kindergarten through second grade. Rather than offering topic-specific sessions, all campers participate together in a variety of activities. The camp runs from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., and is priced at $750 per week. For an additional $100, the museum can provide care after the program concludes from 4 p.m. to 5 p.m.

"We infuse playfulness in everything we do," says Dianne DeStefano, senior educator of playful learning at Boston Children's Museum. "Even the structured programming has a playful element to it."

It may not get much more playful than what DeStefano describes as the camp's "shaving cream and water-palooza" activities. Campers are armed with squeegees and spray bottles and tasked with removing shaving cream from the museum's outside windows. The activity ends with the children frolicking in a giant homemade sprinkler.

"The kids get very messy," DeStefano says with a laugh.

Other activities include spin art and an earthquake table on which campers build structures and test them to see if they would survive the tremors. An outdoor playground next to the museum enables the Explore It program to offer games and other elements of a traditional summer camp as well. The program welcomes children with disabilities and makes accommodations to meet the individual needs of campers.

Alumni of the Orlando Science Center's camp are among the program's most ardent ambassadors. According to Duguid, many campers return to volunteer.

"They love camp so much, they want to come back and support it," she says.

Jeff Stanford enrolled in the camp in the 1970s and never left.

"I was a rather introverted kid, and those camps helped get me out of my shell. We all had fun while learning something new," says Stanford, who started working at the center decades ago and serves as its vice president of marketing. "My son has been attending summer camp from the age of 5. He is now 14 and is spending his first summer as a volunteer." FW

osc.org, bostonchildrensmuseum.org

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1 CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY
CRAFTING YOUNG ENTREPRENEURS

Aspiring young entrepreneurs can make a splash at **Schlitterbahn Galveston Waterpark**.

The Texas water park opens its gates this season to students who completed Galveston County's Lemonade Day curriculum. The educational program teaches students how to operate their own business by conceptualizing and implementing individual lemonade stands. The park hosted an evening awards ceremony for 800 young participants.

SCHLITTERBAHN

"It's about believing in their potential to change the world and empowering them to turn their dreams into reality," says General Manager Rick Belhumeur.

The park provided games, snacks, dancing, and an admission ticket for a complimentary visit to Lemonade Day participants who completed the curriculum.

Schlitterbahn Galveston first partnered with the Galveston Chamber of Commerce in 2012 to encourage children ages 5-18 to register and complete the program.

2 NEW AND NOTABLE

IRISH WONDER

Following seven years of design and construction, **Emerald Park** in Ireland opened **Tír Na nÓg**, a 6.5 acre expansion themed to Irish mythology. **Vekoma** manufactured two intertwined roller coasters: **Na Fianna Force**, a looping suspended coaster and **The Quest** family boomerang. **Jora Vision** completed the theming strategy, with local artisans crafting thematic elements. The €22 million investment is the vision of Emerald Park's late founder, Raymond Coyle.

EMERALD PARK

STARS IN JAPAN

A fresh mystery takes center stage at **Universal Studios Japan** with the debut of **Detective Conan 4-D Live Show: Jewel Under the Starry Sky.** The attraction combines mixed media projections, live actors, and special effects using water spray and smoke. "For this experience, in addition to the core entertainment members, we set up an internal project team with members from across our company who worked with such collaborative dedication over two years to help bring this show to life," says Dan Mitchell with USJ.

USJ

FEELING SMURFY

A new indoor attraction based on **The Smurfs** is headed to Brazil. **Vila dos Smurfs Park** (The Smurfs Village) is envisioned as an indoor, 5,000-square-meter venue offering interactive, educational, and entertaining experiences. **4Act Entretenimiento**, in partnership with **IMPS/Vertical Licensing**, plan to open the São Paulo attraction in 2025. Vila dos Smurfs Park joins other Smurf attractions in Shanghai and Dubai.

VILA DOS SMURFS PARK

3 REVENUE GENERATION
APPETIZING **ADDITIONS**

SPLISH SPLASH

New tastes highlight the 2024 season at **Splish Splash Water Park** in Calverton, New York. Locos Tacos is a new in-house brand, developed with input from guests, that serves tacos, walking tacos, carne asada fries, and frozen drinks. "Our guests were looking for something fun and different," says Danielle Trombetta, director of marketing. "We think it will do pretty well for us."

The park also renovated a location to exclusively serve Ben's Soft Pretzels. Trombetta says the Splish Splash team discovered the brand on the **IAAPA Expo** trade show floor in 2023. Meantime, an expanded Big Kahuna Bazaar—located next to the wave pool—stocks sunscreen, towels, souvenirs, and flip-flops. "We have something for everyone," Trombetta tells Funworld.

4 NATURAL ATTRACTIONS
HOLD MY **DRINK**

KESWICK VINEYARD

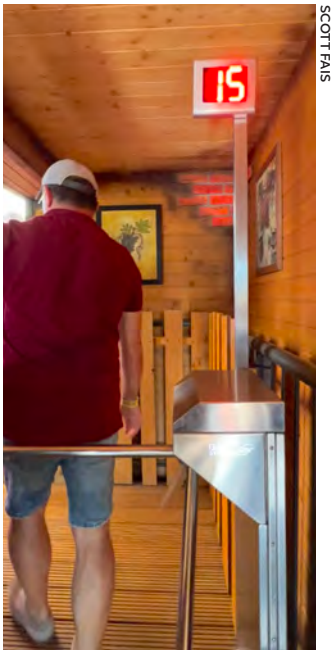
After surviving a plane accident, Al Schornberg sold his computer business and opened **Keswick Vineyard**. Motivated to have more fun in life, Al and his wife, Cindy, added a miniature golf course created by **Adventure Golf & Sports** (AGS). The ADA-compliant, nine-hole course is designed to blend in with the natural surroundings of Virginia's Southwest Mountains. Greens shaped like wine bottles and corkscrews join elevated trays crafted to hold a golfer's glass of wine while they putt.

"Instead of people just sitting and drinking, now they can get up, move, and create an experience—a memory," says Cindy Schornberg.

HAVE A DISPATCH FROM THE FIELD?

Share your 2024 successes and operational innovations with Funworld. Send news, photos, and wins to **FunworldWorks@IAAPA.org**

5 RIDE OPERATIONS
AUTOMATED **GROUPER**



SCOTT FAIS

While achieving proper staffing remains a concern for many operators, **Energylandia** in Zator, Poland, uses a custom turnstile at popular rides. The automated device from Poland-based **Base Systems** features a counter that displays how many open seats remain on the next ride cycle. The guest-facing sign counts down, allowing guests in line to efficiently group themselves, with the goal of filling every seat.

6 MUSEUMS & CULTURAL CENTERS
EXPO'S **LEGACY**

It's an attraction based on an attraction. **Expo 2020 Dubai** took place from October 2021 to March 2022. Paying tribute to the former World Expo is the new **Expo 2020 Dubai Museum**, offering a glimpse into the former attraction's inception, bid, master plan, construction, and operation—along with the challenges presented by a global pandemic. Guided tours take place every 30 minutes at the museum located in Expo City Dubai, the growing community built on the site of Expo 2020. The new museum joins the Women's and Vision Pavilions, the Garden in the Sky observation tower by **Intamin**, and the captivating Surreal water feature as attractions from Expo 2020 that are still in operation.

EXPO CITY DUBAI

KIDS CAPITOL

Kids Capitol FEC in India Encourages Children to Unplug and Play

Playhouse Amusements has opened The Kids Capitol in Kerala, India, a "gadget-free indoor play and party zone." Managing Director Deepa Rajendra Babu's own experience as a mother informed her decision to develop the unique family entertainment center (FEC). "I'm a single mother of two children, and I wanted to create a space for kids like mine, where they could have quality play time away from screens and gadgets," she explains.

The 11,000-square-foot FEC features a large ball pit, slides, mazes, a ninja circuit, and a creative space for kids to explore their imagination. There's also a cafe where parents can relax while still watching their little ones. Visitors pay 499 rupees per hour for one adult and one child. Membership packages are also available.

While The Kids Capitol currently has one location, the FEC also offers franchise opportunities. Playhouse Amusements designs and outfits the play zones, while franchisees are responsible for identifying new venues and negotiating lease terms.

thekidscapitol.com

Peppa Pig Theme Park Planned for China

A standalone Peppa Pig theme park is slated to open on Changxing Island, about 90 kilometers north of Shanghai, in 2027. Hasbro is teaming up with China's Max-Matching Entertainments and the investment firm Shanghai Peiqi for the 48-acre, 2.4 billion yuan project.

"The Peppa Pig outdoor theme park will further enhance Shanghai as a global tourism destination and propel its economy," says Cai Xiaofei, a deputy director of Changxing Island's administrative committee. "We believe this theme park can serve as a flagship attraction for the island."

PEPPA PIG SHANGHAI

The park may be the first of many in China. "We will continue to work closely together to develop more projects in China, including bringing Peppa Pig outdoor theme parks and memorable live experiences to more cities," promises Hasbro Senior Vice President for Global Experiences, Partnerships and Music Matt Proulx.

corporate.hasbro.com/en-us

ALTON TOWERS RESORT

Merlin Entertainments Takes Attractions to the Screen

Merlin Entertainments and media company Wheelhouse are set to develop original entertainment programs inspired by Merlin's global branded attractions portfolio. Together, they aim to create unscripted television programs across various genres, including reality TV, documentaries, and game shows.

Scott O'Neil, CEO of Merlin Entertainments, says, "Our ambition is to amplify how we bring joy, create connections, and make memories for even more than the 62 million guests who visited us in 2023. Through creative innovation and storytelling, our partnership with Wheelhouse will allow us to bring a new dimension to our stories, characters, and IP (intellectual property) on the largest platforms in the world: TV and entertainment programming."

CEO of Wheelhouse, Brent Montgomery, adds, "With Merlin, the possibilities are endless; we're excited to get to work."

merlinentertainments.biz | wheel-house.co.uk

Looping Pledges Continuity and Growth at Drievliet in the Netherlands

Looping Group, a leading operator of regional leisure parks in Europe, continues to expand with the acquisition of Familiepark Drievliet.

Familiepark Drievliet offers 40 attractions and live shows, primarily for families with young children. Looping aims to unlock Drievliet's potential with new developments and by building a complementary platform with its other Netherlands park, Avonturenpark Hellendoorn.

Laurent Bruloy, CEO and co-founder of Looping Group, says, "I would like to congratulate the Faaij family, who founded, developed, and operated the park for almost 90 years ... we feel a deep responsibility to ensure the continuity of this successful story. We are also very pleased to strengthen our presence in the Netherlands with this new acquisition." Wim and Jos Faaij will exit the business, while Piet Faaij will retain a key role within the park.

Familiepark Drievliet is Looping's 19th park. The group expects to attract over 6.6 million visitors in 2024.

looping-group.com

FAMILIEPARK DRIEVLIET

BIRD STUDIO/SHUEISHA, TOEI ANIMATION

Dragon Ball Park Planned for Qiddiya City in Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia continues to grow in the attractions space with ambitious tourism and entertainment projects, including a Dragon Ball theme park.

The global manga and anime phenomenon follows a boy named Son Goku on his quest to collect seven magical orbs. The intellectual property has inspired numerous TV, film, and video game adaptations. Qiddiya Investment Company and Toei Animation have selected Falcon's Creative Group to bring the Dragon Ball experience to life.

The park will offer seven themed lands inspired by Dragon Ball locations, including Kame House, Capsule Corporation, and Beerus' Planet. The lineup includes more than 30 attractions across 500,000 square meters. A wish-granting Eternal Dragon, Shenron, will stand 70 meters above the park and house a signature roller coaster.

"Qiddiya Investment Company, Toei Animation, and our team hold a shared vision to reimagine the world of entertainment and delight consumers in new, innovative ways. This theme park will do just that," says Falcon's Beyond CEO Cecil D. Magpuri.

qiddiya.com/qiddiya-city/dragon-ball | falconscreativegroup.com

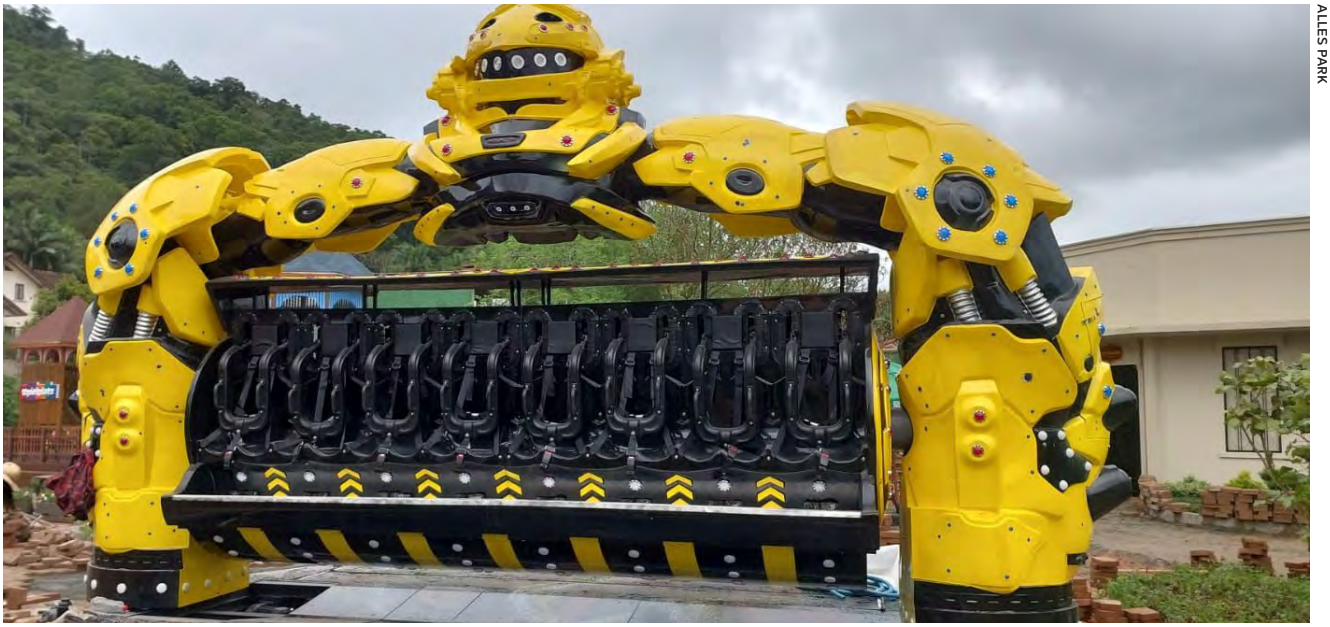
Stepping It Out at Dubai's Global Village

Global Village, the United Arab Emirates-based multicultural family destination for dining, shopping, and entertainment, invited guests to indulge in healthy competition during Ramadan. The park launched an exclusive Step Challenge through the Global Village mobile app.

Guests could activate the Step Challenge upon entry. Participants who completed 10,000 steps during a single visit were automatically added to a weekly prize drawing. Prizes included Samsung Galaxy mobile phones and Apple and Samsung smartwatches. Global Village announced winners every Friday during the holy month of Ramadan through its social media channels and website. In addition to incentivizing guests to visit, the Step Challenge encouraged guests to explore the park and improve their fitness while doing something fun.

globalvillage.ae

GLOBAL VILLAGE



ALLES PARK

New Land and Attractions Debut at Brazil's Alles Park

Located in the state of Santa Catarina in southern Brazil, Alles Park is a family-friendly entertainment center and theme park. As part of a second-phase expansion, a new land packed with new attractions opened its doors earlier this year. In response to visitor requests, the park added a thrill ride to its catalog. Zonzo, a spinning ride from Fun Alliance Company Limited, has two rotating axes and can accommodate up to 16 people.

Other new attractions include a geyser-inspired fountain, a lookout tower, and an aerial carousel-style ride. Inner-tube bumper cars and an interactive experience presented by Flocke, as well as an Easter Bunny-like character that serves as the park's mascot, also join the roster. Spielplatz, the park's playground, received a complete renovation. A new hotel and cable car are future parts of Alles Park's expansion plan.

allespark.com.br

Colombia Announces Groundbreaking Biodiversity Museum

To highlight the immense biodiversity and cultural wealth of Colombia, a museum in the making aims to work toward conservation by creating a network linking local projects, academia, and society as a whole.

The Museum of Biodiversity of Colombia will not prioritize the custody of biological collections. Instead, the institution seeks to increase access to knowledge via a digital presence in addition to its physical exhibits—and transform how humans think about their role in the world.

Announced publicly in March 2024, the innovative museum is currently in the planning and financing phase.

mubico.co

MUBICO

URBNSURF

Urbnsurf Catches Waves in Sydney, Australia

Surf's up in Sydney's first-ever wave park. Urbnsurf has opened a 3.6-hectare, A$75 million facility inside the Sydney Olympic Park. The new facility features the Surf Academy, a skate pad, the Rip Curl retail store, and fitness classes.

"Sydney has an iconic surf culture," says Urbnsurf Sydney General Manager Shaun Hutchinson. "The park offers an inclusive way to experience the sport of surfing, from expert to beginner wave settings and everything in between. Wavegarden technology ensures that our guests experience perfect waves all year-round."

The park, which can welcome up to 1,000 visitors a day, promises 400 waves per hour and "up to 12 perfect waves per person."

Urbnsurf is also partnering with the hospitality group Applejack to provide a premium restaurant with a rooftop terrace, plus an all-day waterfront eatery. There are serviced cabanas as well.

Urbnsurf Sydney is the company's second wave park. It opened its first outlet in Melbourne in 2020.

urbnsurf.com

New Skyline Melbourne Observation Wheel Soars

Australian facility operator Skyline Attractions opened a 35-meter-high Ferris wheel near the city's convention and exhibition center. Named Skyline Melbourne, the new A$5 million observation wheel from Dutch manufacturer Lamberink offers views of the Yarra River, Melbourne's central business district, and neighborhoods like South Wharf and Southbank.

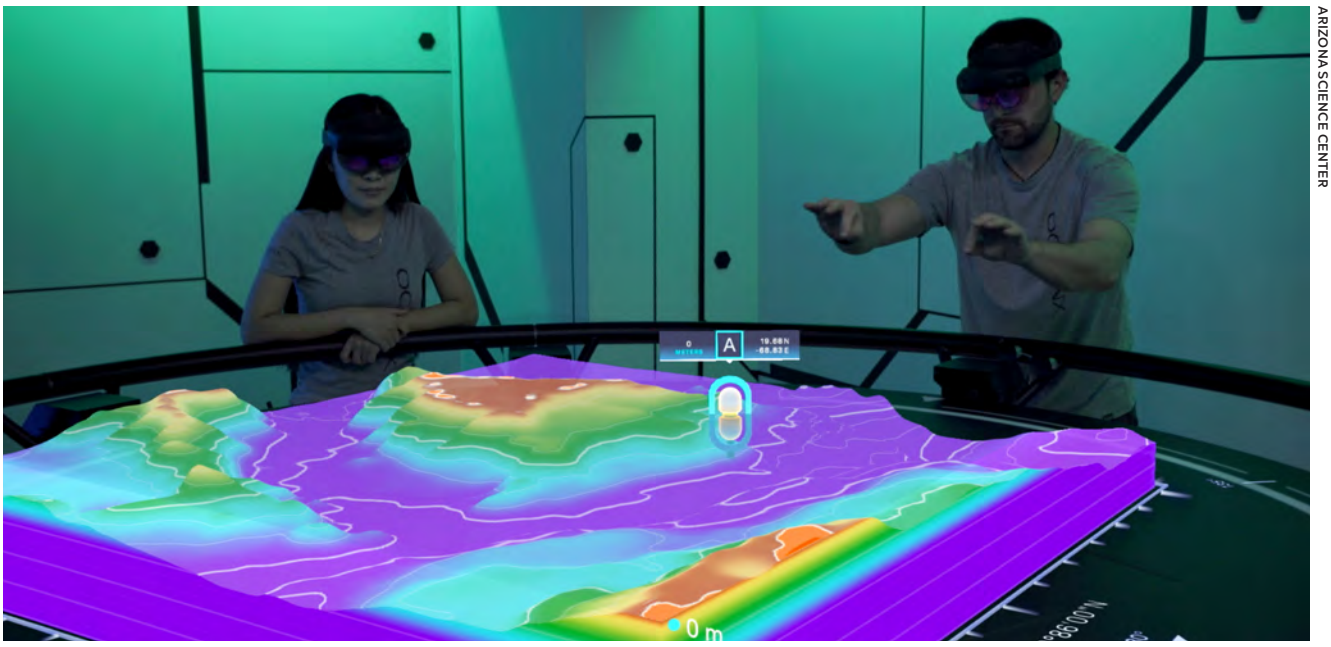
"This exciting new venue promises to be a highlight of the city's attractions, offering an unparalleled experience for all who visit," says Skyline Attractions Business Manager Jane Jones. Tickets are priced at A$20 for the 10-minute ride.

SKYLINE ATTRACTIONS

In addition to the Ferris wheel, the Skyline Precinct features a nine-hole mini-golf course and an opportunity to taste Melbourne's culinary scene with food and beverage options served against the backdrop of the city's skyline.

Skyline Melbourne is the third Ferris observation wheel purchased by the operator, with others situated outside Adelaide and in the coastal Queensland town of Caloundra.

skylinemelbourne.com.au



ARIZONA SCIENCE CENTER

Arizona Science Center Opens OceanXperience Immersive Exhibition

Guests at the Arizona Science Center in Phoenix are now able to climb aboard a replica of the OceanXplorer ship and participate in guided missions, including studying groups of orcas, hammerhead sharks, or humpback whales.

"This exhibition provides guests with the chance to conduct scientific experiments akin to those performed by OceanXplorer scientists and explore some of the most captivating locations in the oceans," says Arizona Science Center Hazel A. Hare President and CEO Guy Labine.

Open through Sept. 2, OceanXplorer provides a completely immersive experience using technologies such as HoloLens 2 headsets in the HoloLab, as well as footage of an OceanX submersible for a true marine explorer experience.

azscience.org

Extinct and Threatened Animal Species Come Alive at Unextinct

This spring, the Columbus Zoo and Aquarium in Powell, Ohio, held Unextinct—an immersive nighttime digital exhibition using light and sound, created by nature-based design studio Mangolin Creative.

Guests had the opportunity to explore 15 areas of illusions featuring more than 70 extinct and threatened species, participate in interactive activities, and enjoy limited time food and beverage offerings.

"Unextinct offers an opportunity to talk about conservation in a new way that inspires our guests to become agents of change and offers hope for the future," says Anthony Sabo, vice president of operations and guest services at the Columbus Zoo and Zoombezi Bay. "This exhibit challenges us to understand our individual role in the ecosystem and the impact of our actions on the world around us. The goal is to empower guests who come to experience Unextinct to support meaningful change and make a difference."

AMANDA CARBERRY/COLUMBUS ZOO AND AQUARIUM

columbuszoo.org

INSIDE OUT CENTRE FOR THE ARTS

First Exhibit Opens in Johannesburg's New Arts Center

Artist and photographer Richard Ballen's new arts center in South Africa hosted its first exhibit in March. Located in Forest Town, a suburban neighborhood on the outskirts of Johannesburg, the Inside Out Centre for the Arts is a not-for-profit foundation created with the goal of contributing to the city's cultural landscape.

Designed by local studio JVR Architects, the raw concrete building is a mysterious, brutalist architecture-inspired multifunctional structure. In addition to an administrative area, a printing area, and Ballen's archive, the recently inaugurated Inside Out Centre for the Arts hosts exhibition spaces capable of showing art and installations in different formats and media.

Established in 2023, the foundation focuses on critical topics and provocative art relevant to the African continent. The center also offers panel discussions, master classes, and educational talks and presentations. Reservations are required to visit the Inside Out Centre for the Arts.

insideoutcentreforthearts.com

Disney Embraces Natural Narratives on Eleuthera

The Bahamian island of Eleuthera entered the spotlight in June as the Disney Cruise Line began sailing to the destination located east of Nassau.

"Disney Lookout Cay at Lighthouse Point really enhances, engages, and embraces the natural beauty and the culture of the island and brings it to guests," says Joey Gaskins, Jr., regional director of public affairs for Disney Cruise Line and a native of Nassau himself.

Sustainability is at the heart of Lookout Cay at Lighthouse Point. At least 90% of the destination's electric needs are met by on-site solar arrays, the pier was designed to avoid the need for dredging, elevated walkways limit the impact on natural landscaping, and the Treasures of Eleuthera retail store features crafts and gifts made by local artisans.

The heart of Lookout Cay includes the Goombay Cultural Center. Each afternoon, guests are invited to create their own headdress and participate in a Junkanoo parade—a Bahamian festival filled with bright costumes, drumming, and dancing.

SCOTT FAIS

"It is the preeminent cultural celebration in The Bahamas," Gaskins, Jr. says of Junkanoo. "It's symbolic of who we are as a people. It is our creativity, our energy, all of it is encapsulated in these parades."

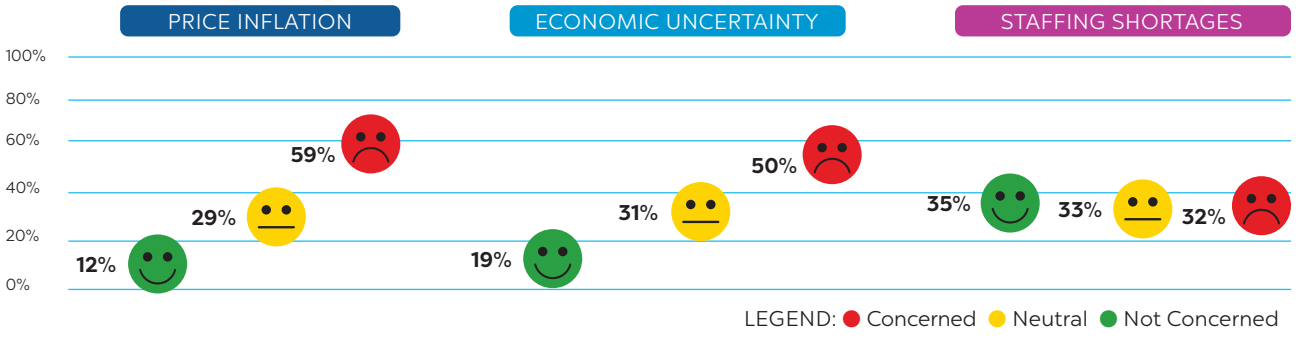
disneycruise.disney.go.com

Operator Outlook: Opportunities and Uncertainties

Global operators are optimistic about the future, with an eye on potential challenges, while remaining mindful of current market conditions, according to insight from the IAAPA Q2 2024 Quarterly Outlook Survey. Some respondents noted increased attendance and spending over the past six months, attributed to the continued post-pandemic recovery. However, inflation, interest rates, ongoing geopolitical tensions, and impending elections have tempered expectations.

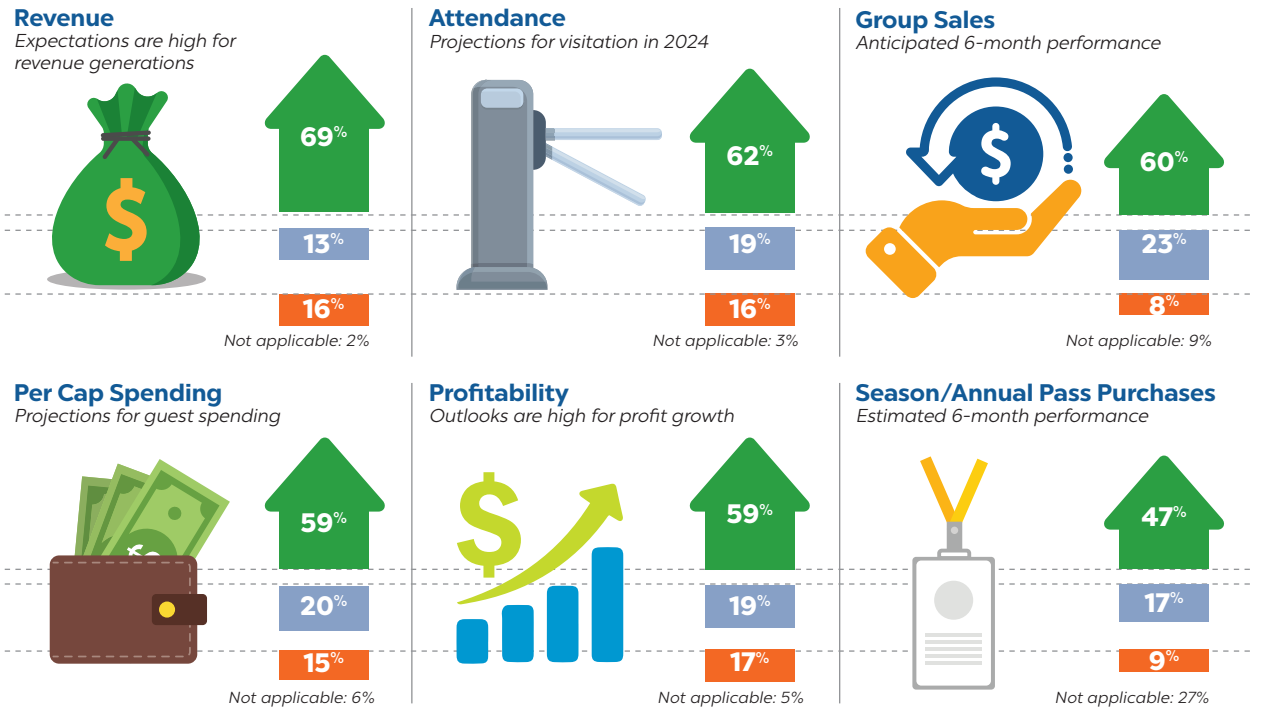
Funworld spotlights sentiments ranging from staffing and spending to attendance and revenue. IAAPA members can find the full results of the Q2 2024 survey at **IAAPA.org/Q2Research**.

Level of Concern for the Next Six Months Relative to Business Impact



Business Performance Outlook *for the Next Six Months vs. Same Period a Year Ago*

Percentage of respondents who expect each category to increase, stay the same or decrease.



The Q2 2024 survey took place April 9-27, 2024; 164 attraction facility professionals participated.

Denotes the percentage of respondents who indicated the category does not apply to their business. See the full results of the Q2 2024 survey at **IAAPA.org/Q2Research.*

We want to hear from you!

IAAPA members are encouraged to take part in the Q3 2024 survey, which is planned for early July. The next survey will provide insight on economic outlooks, business performance, trends, key opportunities, and challenges. Once registered, IAAPA members will receive the survey and instructions via email. As an IAAPA member benefit, participants will also be among the first to receive the results. Visit **IAAPA.org/QuarterlySurvey** to register.

FEVER

The outdoor setting of Sentosa Island's Coastal Trail served as a perfect backdrop for set pieces, like the Hippogriff pictured here.

Harry Potter's Fantastic Beasts Create After Dark Attraction in Singapore

ON A HUMID NIGHT, AMID THE LUSH VEGETATION of Sentosa Island's Coastal Trail in Singapore, two Muggles bow at the waist before a life-size Hippogriff, a mythical creature with the head and wings of an eagle and hindquarters of a horse. Motion detectors sense the visitors' movement, and the 1.75-meter-tall hippogriff bows in return.

Following successful runs in five towns in the United States, United Kingdom, and continental Europe, Harry Potter: A Forbidden Forest Experience debuted in Singapore in February. An additional location at a wooded property an hour south of Melbourne, Australia, named The Briars, opened in April.

The temporary installations, featuring outdoor interactive light and sound trails, are based on stories from "Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets," "Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban," and the Fantastic Beasts trilogy. Created by Warner Bros. Discovery Global Themed Entertainment, the experience was developed in partnership with the theatrical designers Thinkwell and Unify. The project was also supported by the entertainment discovery platform Fever, which is a co-producer in charge of marketing and ticketing.

"Each trail in every different city is tailored and designed specifically for that environment," says Awhina Palmer, a senior public relations and communications specialist with Fever's Australian team.

"This is the first time that the experience has been so close to a city center," adds Jonathan Heng, a Fever Singapore project manager. "Typically, we're hard-pressed to find a forest in the middle of a city. I think it has also changed the expectations and dynamic. It has become an evening activity rather than a destination."

Over a period of three months, more than 100,000 people enjoyed the Singapore experience, where they could cast an Incendio spell to light lanterns, engage in dueling wands with a friend, and summon a magical Patronus guardian animal conjured with the help of a Barco UDX4K32 projector.

While walking the coastal trails, guests could observe bowtruckles, nifflers, and other fantastic beasts illuminated by 1,200 theatrical lights placed amid the palm and tembusu trees. Using an app on their smart phones, guests could interact with scenes, play videos, and take a quiz while strolling the trail.

Visitors in Singapore spent about 45 minutes to an hour in the Forbidden Forest that wrapped up its run in April, as opposed to three hours in other cities. At installations of the same attraction elsewhere, families dined on-site, but an abundance of restaurants on Sentosa Island led Fever to limit the Singapore food and beverage offerings to a S$14 butterbeer elixir (a different, sweeter recipe than those served at U.S. theme parks) and snacks like chili chocolate ice cream catered by Shangri-La Rasa Sentosa.

Back on the trail, the relatively small footprint, compact foliage, and tropical weather presented unique challenges. "The dense and diverse rainforest allowed us to pack in all the elements of the experience into a shorter trail," explains Heng. He shares technical challenges with Funworld, like balancing sound (amid approximately 360 speakers), strategically working with different foliage, and setting up and operating in torrential tropical rains, led to finding creative solutions. FW

Canada's National Treasure

WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO STAGE A SPECIAL EVENT that resonates and is authentically rooted in history and pride? Funworld consults with Grace Peacock, director of communications at Canada's Wonderland, who details how the suburban Toronto park plans, decorates, and operates Celebration Canada.

How did Celebration Canada come about?

We developed Celebration Canada to honor everything that makes our country unique—its history, cultural diversity, natural beauty, and the adventurous spirit of its people. As Canada's largest amusement park, we wanted to create an event that reflects this pride and brings Canadians together. It is also part of our broader events strategy to offer additional value to guests throughout the year beyond the rides and water park. We launched Celebration Canada in 2017 to align with Canada's 150th birthday. This year, Celebration Canada runs from June 28 to July 7.

What does Celebration Canada consist of?

We provide an immersive event experience with lively Canadian entertainment, music, and activities for the whole family. Our culinary team presents a specialty menu with food and drink offerings, representing flavors from across the provinces. This year's program also includes indigenous performances, local live music, and roaming entertainers. We present a fireworks display on Canada Day (July 1) every year. For 2024, we added a second night of fireworks on June 30.

CANADA'S WONDERLAND

CANADA'S WONDERLAND

ABOVE: Fireworks during Canada Celebration light up the night behind B&M's Yukon Striker roller coaster.

LEFT: Local indigenous groups perform at the park.

How has the park evolved the event?

First, it's important for Celebration Canada to be authentic when representing cultural diversity. We've looked to partnerships with local indigenous groups to bring in performances like the White Pine Dancers and the Smoke Trail Singers.

Second, we aim to provide an immersive festival atmosphere. We have grown our decor package for the event and offer new live shows and interactive components, such as the West Coast Lumberjacks show, roaming street performers, and activities for kids, such as axe throwing.

Lastly, elevating the food and beverage experience is integral to the event's success. In addition to offering authentic Canadian cuisine and new menus each year with items, like brisket sliders and poutine. We've partnered with local breweries to develop our own signature beers and ciders, like the Gold Rush Peach Cider and the Tundra Twist Mango Dragonfruit Cider, with Ernest Cider.

What works well to engage guests?

Guests respond well to new entertainment offerings annually, especially our season passholders who may have previously experienced Celebration Canada. Improving the festival vibe with photo opportunities, immersive decor, street performers, and family-friendly activities creates surprise-and-delight moments throughout the event space. Together with the stage shows, the fireworks display, and great food, Celebration Canada offers something for everyone.

How does Canada's Wonderland balance multiple events throughout the year?

During our core spring and summer season, we focus on providing limited-time events with smaller footprints and concentrated entertainment, decor packages, and food programming to maximize the event's impact. This creates immersion without compromising park resources while the rest of the park is in regular operation.

In addition to Celebration Canada, we are hosting a fireworks show every long weekend in 2024, KidZfest with TV characters and superheroes (July 13-28), Oktoberfest (Sept. 7-8 and 14-15), Camp Spooky (Sept. 21-Oct. 27), Halloween Haunt (Sept. 20-Oct. 27), and WinterFest (Nov. 22-Dec. 31).

We aim to continually improve the event experience with new attractions and shows, enhanced food and drink offerings, and guest interactions. We want to keep our events fresh and growing to give guests reasons to visit year after year. FW

by Emmanuel Calderara, Safety Director at Disneyland Paris and Chair of the IAAPA Global Safety Committee

Championing Safety

EDITORS NOTE: This issue of Funworld introduces a new and important Launch segment focusing on safety: the No. 1 priority in the global attractions industry. The goal of Safety Corner is to elevate awareness and stimulate dialogue among professionals. Future editions of Funworld will highlight safety insights for all types of attractions and every aspect of their operations, including ride safety, food preparation, security, animal care, entertainment, and beyond.

FOR ME, THE ATTRACTIONS INDUSTRY REPRESENTS three key elements: magic, passion, and safety. I believe it's magic to work in such a fun industry. Facility operators—along with manufacturers and suppliers—are innately passionate about welcoming visitors.

The global attractions industry has championed safety since the beginning. Therefore, we need to continue to prioritize safety for there to be magical experiences in our venues.

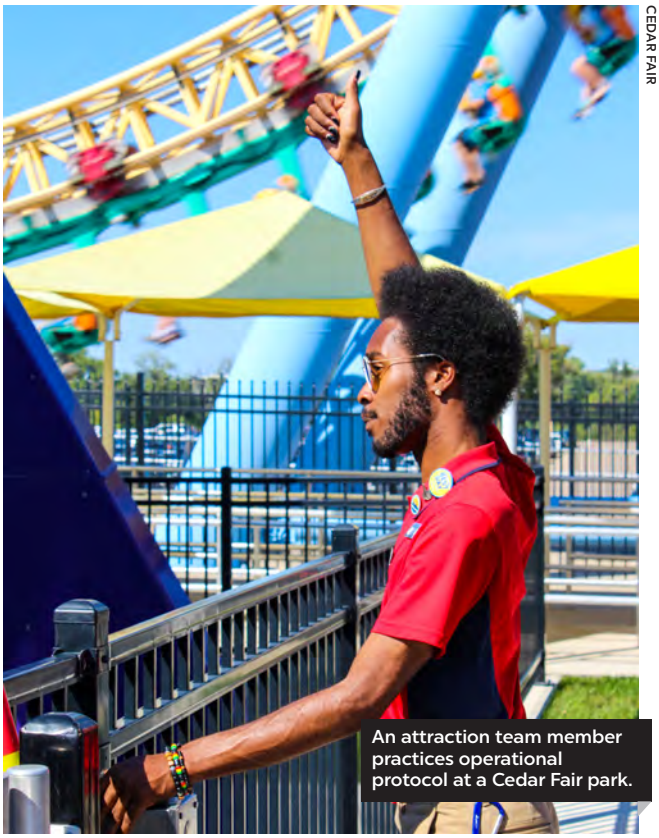
We've used data to identify opportunities to make our industry even safer. Statistics show that in the past 10 years at attractions across Europe:

- European facilities have given more than 1 billion rides in Europe.
- Around one incident occurs per 1 million riders.
- Out of those incidents, 80% were directly related to guest behavior.

Looking specifically at that last data point, we as an industry need to continue to focus on guest behaviors as we evolve and examine meaningful safety guidelines. To help IAAPA members manage these risks, the organization has worked with experts in this field to develop a guest behavior guideline. The Guest Behavior Whitepaper identifies the 10 most common guest misuse behaviors and identifies safe practices to best implement a solution. The whitepaper also features photos of hardware, products, and techniques that operators can implement now to elevate their standards. IAAPA members can read the guide at **IAAPA.org/BehaviorGuidelines**. This guide is designed to help attractions leaders create the right framework to operate at the highest possible level of safety.

In addition to promoting, supporting, and continuously improving safety, IAAPA has created regional safety and security subcommittees that will:

1. Analyze safety trends through member-supported ride safety reports to identify safety opportunities.
2. Bring a global network of safety and technical experts together—from park operators and manufacturers—to facilitate exchanges and conversation.
3. Share good safety practices through publications, webinars, and regional Safety Month events.
4. Organize safety discussions with access to specialists during IAAPA Expos around the world (Safety Days, Safety Corner conversations, panels, and safety roundtables).
5. Ensure expert knowledge is accessible to all IAAPA members.
6. Coordinate with the IAAPA Education Committees to train and educate members.



CEDAR FAIR

An attraction team member practices operational protocol at a Cedar Fair park.

Based on data and trends, IAAPA members who are experts in the field have already worked on procedures for ride evacuation, ride restricted areas, ride commissioning, ride manufacturing, training for operations teams, and ride accessibility.

Furthermore, IAAPA supports efforts to harmonize American ride safety standards (ASTM) and European ride safety norms (EN13814).

Thus, Funworld's new Safety Corner is a great platform to connect with passionate teams to share safety advancements and best practices as we leverage safety in our magical industry.

DISNEY

Emmanuel Calderara is the safety director at Disneyland Paris. A professional engineer with more than 25 years of experience in several industries, he began working in the global attractions industry in 2016 Connect with him on LinkedIn:

JOSH LIEBMAN

Creating Raving Fans Through the Guest Experience

Liebman addresses attractions professionals during a presentation at Area15 in Las Vegas on enhancing the guest experience.

WE NEED TO REDEFINE CUSTOMER SERVICE. Too often, attractions train their staff using phrases like "treat the customer with respect," "smile and be polite," "put yourself in the guest's shoes," or "customer service is all about being nice." These statements aren't wrong, but their overuse means they've lost a lot of their meaning. They're used with good intentions when developing training materials and service standards, but creating the standards isn't the challenging part: It's making the meaning stick with every team member, every guest, every time.

In the attractions industry, we often say that we strive to create memories that last a lifetime, but rarely is that statement expanded upon. It's more than a soft, warm, fuzzy statement—it's the business model! Visiting an attraction is a finite experience with a beginning and an end, and the core product that guests take with them is the memory of their experience (and hopefully some retail, which is a tangible representation of their memory).

An individual's memory of the experience influences their future action. A guest visiting for the second time likely has a positive memory from their first visit. A first-time guest may have made the decision to visit an attraction based on the recommendation of another guest, where their memory turned into a story, social media post, or online review.

With a focus on memory, we can reframe how we craft experiences. When putting together service standards and training modules, instead of asking, "Is this good customer service?" we should ask, "How will the guest remember this interaction?" We need to consider how the guest will share the experience with others long after they leave. What will they say and how loudly will they say it?

The more intentional we are about service delivery, the stronger the memory we can create, and the higher the likelihood that a guest will come back and eventually become an extension of our marketing by influencing others. The more you break from your routine, the more opportunities you receive to exceed expectations—creating an even more impactful memory.

> "The more intentional we are about service delivery, the stronger the memory we can create, and the higher the likelihood that they will come back and eventually become an extension of our marketing by influencing others."

However, it's crucial to remember that a strong memory can be positive or negative, and the memory of a bad experience can outweigh the positive ones. Negative experiences can do more damage to your reputation than how a positive experience can strengthen a guest's lingering perception. A single negative review can turn away up to 30 prospective guests—now, multiply that by your average party size and per capita spend. It adds up! But if you apply this same mentality to the lens of service recovery, you can ask yourself, "How can I make the recovery even more memorable than the complaint?" Doing so will lead the guest to instead focus on how you went above and beyond to fix their problem. Change the mindset, and you'll change the future.

If we shift our focus from satisfaction to creating memorable interactions, we can become the industry that redefines customer service. FW

Josh Liebman works with attractions of all scopes and sizes to amplify the guest experience and hospitality culture, leading to loyalty and advocacy. Josh is a consultant, speaker, co-host of the AttractionPros Podcast, and author of "The Hospitality Mentality." Connect with him by email at **josh@liebmanleisure.com** or on LinkedIn.

Movers and Shakers

by Michael Switow

H. Betti Industries Welcomes New Senior Vice President

H. BETTI INDUSTRIES

Mike Betti

Mike Betti is the new senior vice president of revenue at **H. Betti Industries**, the parent company of Imperial and Betson Enterprises. Betti has nearly three decades of experience in the consumer video game industry, including 10 years at Testronic, where he served as CEO of the Catalis Group's service companies. Betti has also held management roles at Ubisoft and Sony PlayStation. In his new role, Betti's focus will be on enhancing the company's product portfolio and broadening its market presence.

Promotion to Business Development Director at Polin

POLIN WATERPARKS

Ahmet Sumer

Ahmet Sumer is leading the **Polin Group**'s expansion efforts in Latin America as the company's new business development director. Sumer received the promotion after serving six years as Polin's head of sales. "With his deep understanding of the region's dynamics and market trends, he is well-positioned to capitalize on emerging opportunities and strengthen the company's presence in this strategically important region," says Polin Board Member and Director of Sales Bilge Pakiş. "Sumer's appointment underscores the Polin Group's commitment to investing in top talent and strengthening its global leadership team to drive sustainable growth and expansion initiatives."

New Business Development Director at JRA

LISA SCHANLEY

Lisa Schanley

Lisa J. Schanley has joined the master planning firm **JRA**, where she is spearheading strategic development and helping to drive the company's growth. "I am eager to collaborate with the incredibly talented team at JRA and to showcase the company's unique vision and shining personality worldwide," says Schanley, who has over two decades of experience in business development, growth strategies, marketing, and public relations.

New CEO Helms Christie Digital Systems

CHRISTIE

Takabumi Asahi

Takabumi Asahi will now head **Christie Digital Systems**. Asahi has worked with Christie's parent company, Ushio, since 2017, most recently as its chief financial officer and managing executive officer. He brings more than 30 years' experience to his new role. "I am committed to Ushio's focus on creating businesses with greater social value," says Asahi. "I'm excited to continue Christie's important work in developing exceptional experiences for its customers and lighting the way to a sustainable, brighter future for everyone."

New Project Director at Pico Play

HADI SALAHAT

Hadi Salahat

Hadi Salahat joins **Pico Play** as its new project director for the Middle East. Salahat has more than a decade of experience with high-end theming and fit-out projects, including Warner Bros. World and the Center of Curiosity Museum in Abu Dhabi. "With his impressive background in the region and extensive experience in theming projects—including theme parks, high-rises, hotels, and residential projects—Hadi is set to lead us to new heights in creating immersive and engaging fun experiences," says Pico Play Executive Director Darren McLean.

ZCG-Backed VENU+ Acquires NXT Capture

VENU+, a global provider of guest mobility, storage, and entertainment solutions, has acquired **NXT Capture**, a photography solutions business operating in attractions. VENU+ is backed by affiliates of **Z Capital Partners, L.L.C.**, the private equity fund management arm of Z Capital Group, L.L.C. (ZCG). NXT Capture founder Brian Ramdat will join VENU+ as vice president of technology to aid in product development and expand its customer base, while also integrating facial recognition technology for increased guest engagement.

In Memoriam

by Avery Matteo

Richard M. Sherman

IAAPA

Richard M. Sherman

Richard M. Sherman, a legendary songwriter known for creating some of the most iconic tunes in the attractions world alongside his brother Robert, has passed away at the age of 95. Sherman's death follows his brother's passing in 2012. The duo's work has been celebrated for its enduring impact, with songs featured in beloved films like "Winnie the Pooh," "Mary Poppins," and in the timeless theme park attraction It's a Small World, which is recognized as one of the most performed songs globally.

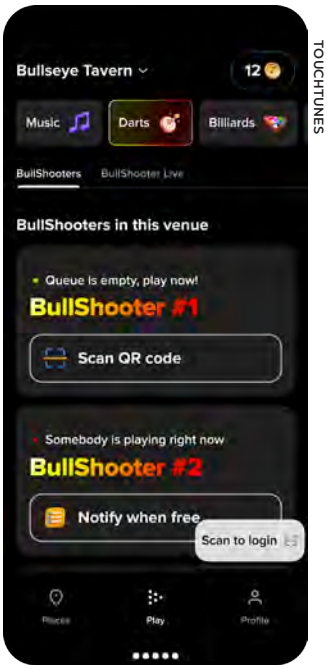
For a more personal glimpse into Sherman's legacy, watch his IAAPA Oral History interview at **IAAPA.org/Sherman**

Cashless Payments

TouchTunes launched a digital payment system called **FunWallet** that allows guests to pay for in-venue amusement machines with their phones. FunWallet rolls out this year with Bullshooter dartboards, which TouchTunes acquired from Arachnid 360 in February.

Payment provider **ASK Global Solutions** and tabletop games manufacturer **Valley-Dynamo** are also partnering with TouchTunes to extend FunWallet's reach.

"We see this as a huge step forward for the amusement industry," says TouchTunes CEO Ross Honey. "Our goal is always to make the in-venue entertainment experience as seamless as possible, so people can focus on what really matters—having fun and connecting."



TOUCHTUNES

touchtunes.com

Cuddly Care Bears Ride

Sally Dark Rides teamed up with **Cloudco Entertainment** to create the world's first **Care Bears** family dark ride. After boarding a "Cloud Car" ride vehicle, guests are immersed in a bright, colorful environment with handcrafted set pieces and cuddly Care Bears animatronics.

SALLY DARK RIDES

"For over four decades, the Care Bears have been a part of our lives through animated series, movies, and top-selling toys. We see incredible potential," says Sally Dark Rides Vice President of Business Development and Marketing Lauren Weaver, who adds that theme parks have seen great success when they bring a fan-favorite, multi-generational brand like Care Bears to life.

sallydarkrides.com

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by Arthur Levine

Striking Gold with Pinsetting Equipment

CALL IT LUCK. CALL IT FATE. Sometimes, an event can change the course of a person's life and span generations. For Bill Campbell Sr., that event occurred in 1956 when he was 14 years old.

An avid bowler, the owner of the duckpin lanes near his home came up to him and asked if he wanted to be a "pin boy," referencing the young workers who manually set the pins between turns.

"Well, I was in heaven," Campbell reflects on the job offer.

He got 8¢ per game, and, if he was lucky, the bowlers would roll a dime, a quarter, or if they were big spenders, a half dollar down the gutter as tips.

"I'll never forget it," the 82-year-old Campbell told me as he wistfully pointed to a yellowed photograph of him and other pinsetters. "They were very good days. That's where it all started."

With the advent of automatic pinsetting equipment, the job only lasted a couple of years. However, Campbell never lost his love for the sport. Years later, entrepreneur Jimmy Ryan bought the duckpin lanes and hired Campbell, who was a fixture there, to manage it. Married with two sons at age 35, he was back in the employ of the bowling establishment for a few years until Ryan sold it.

Campbell's oldest boy, Billy, Jr., also fell in love with the game and cherished the first set of bowling balls he received as a youngster. Billy's younger brother, Peter, became fascinated by the pinsetting equipment. A born tinkerer, he began taking the machinery apart at the age of 8.

Ryan bought additional locations and brought Peter on as a mechanic when he graduated high school in the mid-1990s. After observing his hard work, Ryan made Peter a manager of one of the bowling and arcade centers at 19 years old. Because he needed help, Peter coaxed Billy to work with him and lured Bill Sr. back into the industry to co-manage the location.

"We're a tight family. We help each other out," explains Billy.

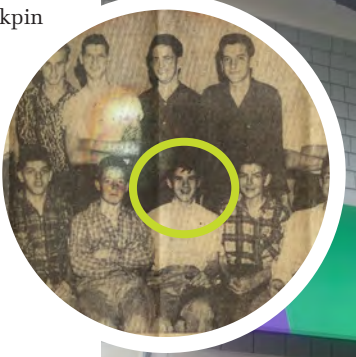
The three Campbells remained with Ryan Family Amusements, and the brothers moved up the ladder in the burgeoning company. Billy and Peter became part of the ownership group. Earlier this year, Billy was promoted to president of the company, which now includes 10 family entertainment centers throughout New England. Peter's three sons work for the company, and Billy's children and wife have logged hours as well.

"Jimmy Ryan is a saint," Billy says. "What he did for our family is incredible."

The Campbells shared their story with me at one of Ryan's centers on Cape Cod amid the clamor of rolling balls and clacking pins that has been the soundtrack of their lives. Retired at the end of 2023, it was the first time Bill Sr. had been back at the lanes, and the memories were overwhelming.

"It's meant a lot to me," he says as he gestures toward the bowlers and holds back tears. FW

RYAN FAMILY AMUSEMENTS



ABOVE: Campbell Family outside Ryan's– (L to R) Pete Campbell, Jr., Brett Campbell (kneeling), Nick Campbell, Peter Campbell, Sr., Bill Campbell, Sr., Billy Campbell, Jr.

INSET: Bill Campbell, Sr. still has the photo of himself of a young man when he fell in love with bowling.

A lifelong attractions fanatic, **Arthur Levine** first started writing newspaper and magazine travel features about the industry he loves in 1992. He produces his own Substack newsletter, "Arthur's About Theme Parks" at AboutThemeParks.fun

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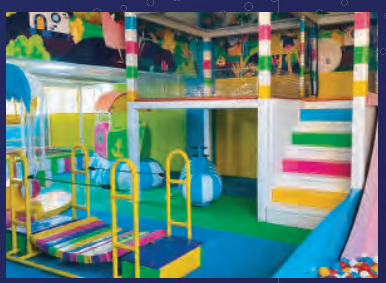

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Association News and Benefits

30 IAAPA Expo Europe Preview

34 Summit Recaps

36 IAAPA Foundation

38 IAAPA Advocacy

39 IAAPA Member Benefits

40 Events Calendar

IAAPA Expo Europe Preview
p. 30

 Story by Avery Matteo, Photos by Jordi Muntal

Discover More at IAAPA Expo Europe 2024

FROM SEPT. 23–27, attractions professionals will experience a transformative week at the much-anticipated IAAPA Expo Europe 2024 in Amsterdam. Drawing exhibitors and attendees from the Europe, Middle East, and Africa (EMEA) region and beyond, the event is curated to bring value to attractions industry innovators, professionals, and learners across various disciplines.

Amsterdam: A Vibrant Host City

Set against the backdrop of a city renowned for its innovation and forward-thinking mentality, IAAPA Expo Europe 2024 will be hosted at the RAI Amsterdam, located a short seven-minute walk from a railway station. The vibrant location was chosen by members through their respective representatives on IAAPA's regional M&S committee and approved by the regional advisory committee, the global M&S committee, and the IAAPA Board of Directors.

As the home of iconic theme parks, museums, zoos, and renowned attractions, the varied offerings in the Netherlands represent the diversity and richness of the attractions industry.

"The Netherlands sets a perfect scene for our Expo, with many high-level attractions and parks, while also being the home of a wide variety of manufacturers and suppliers," says Vice President and Executive Director of IAAPA EMEA Peter van der Schans.

Networking Opportunities

At the heart of IAAPA Expo Europe lies the invaluable opportunity to connect, collaborate, and forge lasting relationships within the industry. With a bustling show floor boasting the largest exhibition space in the history of IAAPA Expo Europe, attendees will have ample opportunities to explore the latest innovations and products from hundreds of exhibitors.

Hundreds of exhibitors will present their latest products in Amsterdam.

The Expo will also include new networking receptions geared toward various markets, including water parks, indoor entertainment, food and beverage, zoos and aquariums, science centers, museums, natural attractions, and beyond.

Educational Offerings

IAAPA Expo Europe 2024 isn't just about networking and innovation; it's also a hub of learning and professional development. With a robust educational program featuring keynote speakers, short-form EDUTalks, EDUSessions, leadership presentations, and signature EDUTours, attendees will gain insights into the latest trends, issues, and best practices shaping the attractions industry.

This year, IAAPA Expo Europe is changing its approach to education. "The education subcommittee had a bottom-up approach, incorporating member feedback to tailor our educational offerings more effectively," explains IAAPA EMEA Education Manager Tom Van Liefferinge. "Our focus on different experience levels enhances learning, ensuring it meets the diverse needs of our community. Through peer learning and the latest industry insights, we're focused on supporting every member's professional growth and success."

Attendees can also look forward to educational experiences that are more extensive and varied than ever before. "Join us for unique experiences celebrating our sector's rich diversity amid the backdrop of the Netherlands, a location renowned for its parks and attractions," says IAAPA EMEA Events and Meetings Manager Lucille Datta.

The IAAPA Institute for Attractions Professionals (IAP) will also take place the weekend before Expo, offering specialized sessions catered to different experience levels and sets of knowledge. The program is designed to accelerate understanding of the attractions industry and its key business indicators.

Embracing Sustainability

In line with the growing focus on sustainability within the attractions industry, IAAPA Expo Europe 2024 is committed to championing eco-friendly practices and initiatives. From reducing greenhouse gas emissions to offering meatless options on Thursday, Sept. 26, the event aims to minimize its environmental footprint while fostering inclusivity and accessibility for all participants. Through partnerships with eco-certified accommodation providers, environmentally friendly transport alternatives, and a sustainability commitment form offered to exhibitors in exchange for a sustainability logo added to the floor sticker in front of their booth, IAAPA Expo Europe is paving the way for a more sustainable future.

Giving Back

Beyond its professional offerings, IAAPA Expo Europe also embraces the spirit of philanthropy. Building on the

IAAPA EXPO EUROPE

Visit **IAAPA.org/IAAPAExpoEurope** to learn more and register.

fundraising success of last year's campaign, attendees will have the opportunity to contribute to the IAAPA Foundation scholarship fund through donations, auctions, and the sale of traditional Dutch delicacies, such as stroopwafels.

Safety First

As safety remains paramount within the attractions industry, IAAPA Expo Europe 2024 places a strong emphasis on safety education and awareness. With dedicated events like the Safety Institute and Safety Day catering to professionals at all levels of expertise, attendees can stay abreast of the latest safety protocols and best practices.

"Safety remains the top priority for our industry. This year, Safety Corner returns to IAAPA Expo Europe, alongside other initiatives such as Safety Day and Safety Exchange. Safety Corner is the place to meet with experts from the IAAPA EMEA Safety Subcommittee and engage in informal, open discussions during select opening hours," says IAAPA EMEA Government Relations Associate Moritz Bartosch.

IAAPA Expo Europe 2024 isn't just an event; it's a celebration of innovation, collaboration, and the potential of the attractions industry. Against the backdrop of Amsterdam's kinetic energy and the Netherlands' rich cultural landscape, professionals from across the EMEA region and beyond will come together to unlock new opportunities, forge meaningful connections, and shape the future of fun. FW

something, there can be fun solutions also for others where the mobile is not the enemy, but you engage with it to
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Story by Michael Costello,
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IAAPA Summit 2024 + Latin American Amusement Expo Crafts Connections

IAAPA SUMMIT 2024 + LATIN AMERICAN AMUSEMENT EXPO took place in Medellín, Colombia, April 15-18, offering a wide range of opportunities for industry professionals. During the event, two days of EDUSessions led by renowned experts from around the world allowed attendees to connect with influential decision-makers, discover new products, and explore the largest trade show floor in the region.

"The event provided a unique opportunity for networking among high-level professionals, educational learning, and the exploration of new business opportunities in a dynamic and inspiring environment," says IAAPA Latin America, Caribbean Vice President and Executive Director Paulina Reyes.

Following the Expo and EDUSessions, participants embarked on two days of behind-the-scenes tours, starting with Parque Tutucán—an attraction that celebrates the rich culture, traditions, and art of the 125 municipalities in the Antioquia region of Colombia.

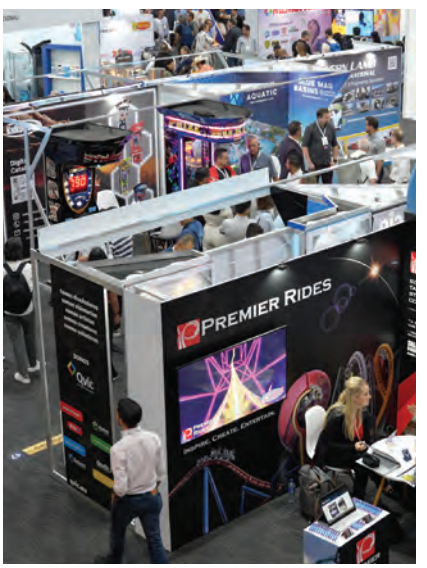
The next stop on the tour was at Parque Temático Hacienda Nápoles, where attendees were treated to dinner and an inspiring presentation by CEO Oscar Jairo Orozco, which covered the park's transformative history, its journey toward prosperity and development in the region, its commitment to sustainability and preservation, and the significant impact of entertainment on the local community. With more than 1.2 million guests annually in a town of 10,000 people, the park serves as a beacon of success with its three water parks, safari park, amusement park, two hotels, and other attractions.

Attendees participated in EDUTours, which included walks through the parks and learning about the park's conservation, preservation, and rescue mission from veterinarians and animal handlers.

EDUTours at Congo Amusement Park, the resort's newest attraction set to open this summer, covered various topics, including ride theming, reconditioning and automation of traveling rides, water treatment and recycling for water rides, and construction challenges.

EDUTours continued at Pangea water park, where attendees, guided by professionals, explored the park facilities, a water pump room, and water treatment spaces.

To celebrate the connections and valuable business relationships established throughout the four-day event, a closing dinner and party was held at Victoria Falls.



Attendees Explore Leisure Market Potential at IAAPA EMEA Spring Summit

2024 event hosted in Türkiye provided value and connections

MORE THAN 120 PARTICIPANTS from 15 countries forged new connections during the two-day IAAPA EMEA Spring Summit on April 24–25. Marking IAAPA's return to Türkiye for the first time in nearly a decade, the association took this opportunity to open doors to a compelling and colorful hybrid attraction, The Land of Legends. The Rixos Premium Belek resort combines a hotel, Adventure Land theme park, Aqua Land water park, and Shopping Avenue. The campus has grown to be one of the largest comprehensive attractions in Antalya, with many ambitious plans ahead.

"IAAPA's mission is to establish a platform for connections and shared knowledge across the globe. IAAPA EMEA Spring Summit brought industry professionals to the growing Turkish leisure market," says IAAPA EMEA Vice President and Executive Director Peter van der Schans. "We are grateful to our member and the host The Land of Legends for their incredible hospitality and unique insights. Our goal is to showcase various parts of our region and different leisure models to support everyone in our industry and learning from each other's successes."

The event began with a keynote from the Turkish Amusement Parks Association (TEPEA) about the Turkish leisure market and continued with speakers from Breda University of Applied Science, DOF Robotics, KidZania Istanbul, The Land of Legends, Merlin Entertainments, and PwC Türkiye. Topics included insights about the local market, latest global trends, leadership skills in times of uncertainty, artificial intelligence in attractions, and sustainability case studies.

The robust education conference concluded with numerous EDUTours designed to take attendees behind the scenes at The Land of Legends. Participants learned about operations in a theme park open 265 days per year, visited the biggest aquarium restaurant in the country, took part in a chocolate-making workshop, boarded Venetian-style boats, climbed on top of the park's Chateau castle, experienced Turkish hospitality, and learned how to redefine a shopping experience based on ideas and insights from the Shopping Avenue section of the resort.

Following the summit, additional IAAPA Connections events welcomed industry professionals around the region. In May, the Netherlands played host to IAAPA Presents: Insights Day, Drenthe, conducted in Dutch. In June, another event, IAAPA Presents: Paultons Park, took place near Southampton in the United Kingdom. FW

Learn more about IAAPA Connections events at **IAAPA.org/Connections**

 by Avery Matteo

IAAPA Foundation Supporter Shares Motivations

THE IAAPA FOUNDATION IS DEDICATED to fostering and nurturing the next wave of leaders in the global attractions industry. Through scholarships, educational funds, and industry connections, the foundation aims to support the dreams of aspiring attractions professionals across the globe.

The IAAPA Foundation's support of emerging industry luminaries is only made possible by the support of individuals like Bernie Campbell, ICAE, regional vice president of sales at Whirley-Drinkworks!—a designer and manufacturer of food and beverage containers—and a dedicated IAAPA advocate.

Campbell is a long-standing member of the IAAPA community and an advocate for the IAAPA Foundation's cause. With more than 30 years of IAAPA Expo attendance and attractions industry experience under his belt, Campbell's contributions to the association span a multitude of roles and responsibilities. From serving on committees to speaking at several IAAPA Expos and in webinars, his dedication to the industry is palpable.

Reflecting on his trajectory, Campbell emphasizes the transformative impact of IAAPA membership. "IAAPA was the 'go-to' organization," he shares, highlighting the networking and educational opportunities afforded by leveraging IAAPA's various avenues for connection.

When asked about his support for the IAAPA Foundation, Campbell shares his reasoning for giving back. "I learned an awful lot about the industry through IAAPA, and I feel strongly that one should always find a way to give back and pay it forward," he asserts. Supporting IAAPA's efforts is not just an obligation for Campbell, but it's also a heartfelt commitment to nurturing the industry.

To those considering donating to the IAAPA Foundation, Campbell offers a compelling call to action. "It's an amazing industry with so many opportunities, both directly and in supporting roles," he says. Through collective support, Campbell believes that the foundation can unlock the potential of talented individuals worldwide.

"I learned an awful lot about the industry through IAAPA, and I feel strongly that one should always find a way to give back and pay it forward."

— Bernie Campbell, ICAE

To learn more and contribute to the IAAPA Foundation, visit **IAAPA.org/IAAPAFoundation**

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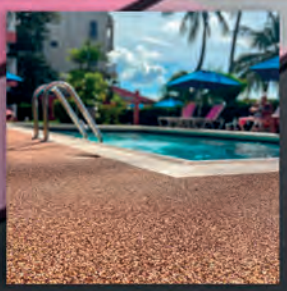

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IAAPA Advocates for Sustainable Tourism at Rhodes Forum in Greece

IAAPA AND REPRESENTATIVES from various European travel and tourism associations convened at the first edition of the Rhodes Forum in Greece April 8–9, marking the collective acknowledgment of sustainable tourism priorities in the European Union (EU). The forum served as a platform for addressing the pressing issue of climate change and promoting sustainable practices, along with pioneering industry-specific ideas.

One of the significant outcomes of the forum was the signing of a joint declaration by European travel and tourism industry leaders, reaffirming their commitment to prioritize decarbonization, foster collaboration, and engage in constructive dialogue with policymakers.

To read the joint declaration signed by IAAPA, visit **IAAPA.org/SustainableTourism**

The declaration not only underscores the industry's acknowledgment of the urgent need for action, but it also provides a roadmap for individuals and companies seeking the resources they need to implement sustainable actions.

IAAPA recognizes the immense potential benefits for its members in advocating for such proactive engagement. The EU's tourism sector, contributing nearly 9% to its gross domestic product, stands as a vital economic pillar; despite its prominence, however, some believe there is a noticeable absence of an active EU agenda concerning tourism. The Rhodes Forum not only addressed this disparity, but also laid the groundwork for enhanced cooperation among industry associations, aiming to drive a more collaborative agenda within the EU that will allow the environments driving revenue in the region to thrive for years to come.

The forum's significance was further amplified by the presence of notable figures, including the Governor of the Aegean Islands, the Greek Minister of Tourism, and the Greek Prime Minister. Their attendance reflects a growing recognition of the tourism industry's importance and the need for action to address its challenges. "It brings together so many associations and representatives of the tourism industry to highlight what indeed is the most critical issue that tourism is facing today," says Prime Minister of Greece Kyriakos Mitsotakis.

IAAPA Government Relations Associate Moritz Bartosch returned home with a strong belief in the forum's value. "The tourism industry is a vital part of the European economy. But we go beyond the economic impact: We bring people and cultures together, share the European idea, and can promote sustainability as a core value to our guests. I'm pleased that through this initiative, our associations are collectively advocating for the tourism industry, emphasizing its significance, and demonstrating our commitment to driving positive change across various businesses," says Bartosch.

Looking ahead, IAAPA remains committed to advocating for its members in the European Union and beyond. With different EU policies currently targeting the attractions industry, IAAPA will continue to cooperate with policymakers to create frameworks promoting sustainable practices while maintaining a focus on the diverse interests and needs of its members. FW

Unlock the Value of IAAPA Membership

AS THE GLOBAL LEADER IN THE ATTRACTIONS INDUSTRY, IAAPA offers a robust suite of membership benefits tailored to professionals, companies, and organizations of all kinds.

Membership Options

IAAPA caters to the varied needs of industry stakeholders and offers three membership categories:

- **Attraction Facilities:** Designed for amusement parks, water parks, family entertainment centers (FEC's) museums, zoos, natural attractions, resorts and more, this membership provides comprehensive coverage for entire facilities, irrespective of size.
- **Manufacturer/Supplier/Consultant:** Tailored for companies engaged in manufacturing, supplying, or consulting within the attractions sector, this membership extends across the entire organizational spectrum.
- **Individual:** Crafted for professionals operating within the attractions industry, this membership offers tailored categories catering to diverse career stages, including young professionals, retirees, educators, and students.

Member Benefits

IAAPA membership affords unparalleled advantages aimed at driving strategic growth and fostering professional development.

News and Publications

- **Funworld Magazine:** Gain access to the industry's preeminent source of information, covering trends, innovations, and best practices, delivered in print and digital formats.
- **IAAPA News Daily:** Stay informed with exclusive e-newsletters, delivering timely updates and insights from across the global attractions landscape.
- **IAAPA.org Access:** Seamlessly navigate industry news, event information, educational resources, and regional updates via IAAPA.org, the association's centralized online platform.

Connections

- **Expos and Events:** Experience premier networking, innovation, and knowledge-sharing opportunities at IAAPA's flagship events, where members enjoy exclusive perks and savings on registration fees, exhibit spaces, and event tickets.
- **IAAPA Regional Events:** Network with industry peers and stakeholders at discounted rates through a comprehensive calendar of regional networking events.
- **IAAPA Connect+:** Enhance your event experience with an interactive platform providing easy access to schedules, exhibitor information, wayfinding tools, and the chance to connect with fellow attendees.
- **IAAPA Connect+ Marketplace:** Access a virtual hub for year-round networking and business opportunities, connecting buyers and sellers across the globe.
- **IAAPA Job Board:** Source top talent and explore career opportunities within the global attractions industry through IAAPA's dedicated job board.

Research and Resources

- **Reports and Industry Data:** Tap into the premier source of global attractions research. Explore operational benchmark reports, regional economic impact studies, quarterly outlook surveys, and an annual global theme and amusement park outlook study.
- **Crisis Communications Support:** Ensure your organization is ready for a crisis. Download IAAPA's Crisis Communications Template from the IAAPA Bookstore. In a crisis, call the 24/7 support line: +1 321-319-7602.
- **Business Solutions Partnership Program:** Provides the resources and support to create new and proven revenue streams, reduce costs, and optimize operational efficiencies.
- **Hosted Buyer Program:** Meet with a wide range of IAAPA Expo exhibitors to learn about new products and trends, network with leaders, and stay up to date with the latest industry developments.

Education

- **Certification Programs:** Elevate professional credentials with esteemed certification programs, including the IAAPA Certified Attractions Professional (ICAP) and IAAPA Certified Attractions Executive (ICAE) designations.
- **Webinars, Webcasts, and Online Learning:** Engage in monthly live webinars, archived sessions, and online learning resources covering industry-specific topics, which are available in multiple languages.

Safety Standards and Training

- **Facility Excellence Self-Assessment:** Leverage IAAPA's safety tool to measure progress and assess the health of safety procedures.
- **Safety Guidance:** Prioritize safety and compliance with IAAPA's global efforts to establish industry-leading safety standards and comprehensive training initiatives.

Public Affairs

- **Industry Advocacy:** Benefit from IAAPA's advocacy efforts aimed at shaping industry regulations and legislation to ensure a conducive business environment for attractions professionals worldwide.

IAAPA membership serves as a catalyst for professional growth and industry advancement, offering a wealth of benefits tailored to meet the diverse needs of attractions professionals worldwide. Join IAAPA today and unlock the full spectrum of advantages poised to elevate success within the global attractions industry. Visit **IAAPA.org** to learn more.

This is a partial listing of upcoming IAAPA events. Event details are as of June 10, 2024, and subject to change. For the most up-to-date information, visit **IAAPA.org/Events**

JULY 2024

IAAPA EXPLORES

Sustainability
9-13 | Paris

SEPTEMBER 2024

IAAPA APAC Trade Summit
4-5 | Shanghai

IAAPA Public Affairs Conference
9-11 | Washington, D.C.

IAAPA EXPO EUROPE

IAAPA Expo Europe
23-26 | Amsterdam

NOVEMBER 2024

IAAPA EXPO

IAAPA Expo
18-22 | Orlando

JANUARY 2025

IAAPA FEC Summit 2025
19-21 | New Orleans

IAAPA WEBINARS

IAAPA members enjoy complimentary access to webinars on hot topics in the industry. Registrants can earn one credit hour toward IAAPA recertification by participating in each webinar. The webinars are included with IAAPA membership and are presented in English, with select webinars offered in Spanish and Portuguese. To view the full schedule of upcoming webinars, register, or submit a proposal, visit **IAAPA.org/Events**

UPCOMING WEBINARS

Selection of IAAPA webinars current as of June 10, 2024. All subject to change.

Mastering Lead Quality and Post-Show Sales Conversion

July 23 | CEUs: 1 | 11 a.m.-12 p.m. ET

IAAPA research has pinpointed lead generation as the No. 1 reason companies exhibit at our Expos. Given that many companies operate with extended sales cycles, the ability to capture high-quality leads and nurture them effectively over time significantly impacts exhibiting ROI. This newly curated webinar is laser-focused on providing invaluable insights and strategies to swiftly enhance lead quality and position you for heightened post-show sales conversion.

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Portals to Creativity

KELLY SCHWARTZ MAY SAY IT BEST: "What is this Meow Wolf thing? It's so hard to explain." As the general manager of Meow Wolf's Grapevine, Texas, exhibition, Schwartz is often asked to define the attraction.

"Come curious. And the more you explore, the more you're going to love it," says Schwartz while comfortably curled up in an oversized upholstered chair found in the attraction's multi-purpose art studio.

Part art gallery; part selfie museum; part escape room with its immersive, play-as-you-go storylines; part proactive community partner dedicated to promoting the arts; and 100% its own genre of attraction, Meow Wolf operates much like a museum or family entertainment center.

"I think that fundamentally—at its base—we're operated very similarly. We have team members that are helping to sell retail, scanning your tickets, greeting you into the exhibit, and helping you out. So, I think at a very basic level, yes, we are location-based entertainment," Schwartz says.

Yet, that's where the components of a traditional attraction end and mind-bending experiences begin.

"I really encourage people to be careful and remind them that we're not liable for expanded thinking and consciousness that you may experience if you'd leave this dimension and travel beyond," hints Kent Caldwell, creative director of Meow Wolf's Las Vegas location.

Hidden portals—like a walk-in refrigerator (as seen above)—transport visitors into immersive spaces lined with art that challenge conventional thinking.

Inside Meow Wolf's own genre of attraction

by Scott Fais

COVER PHOTO: MEOW WOLF; DIGITAL STYLING: JOSH MILLER

Meow Wolf gave Funworld the key to unlock its creative doors, where insight to design, operation, and staffing await.

Starting With a Blank Canvas

A relatively young brand, Meow Wolf's origin dates back to 2008 when a group of artists used junk to create immersive art spaces (and threw some boisterous warehouse parties). Legend has it that the collective of artists based in Santa Fe, New Mexico, each tossed two words into a hat. The first two words pulled from the hat formed "Meow Wolf," and the moniker stuck.

"They wanted to change our reality and give us all new possibilities," says Meow Wolf CEO Jose Tolosa of the attraction's founders. "Our artists are in the business of creating unique worlds that transform people's minds."

The team responsible for Meow Wolf's first permanent attraction, House of Eternal Return, successfully applied for B Corp Certification—a distinction that indicates a business is operating with transparency, demonstrating high social and environmental performance, and maintaining a corporate governance structure that is accountable to all stakeholders (not just shareholders).

Today, Meow Wolf operates Denver's Convergence Station (opened 2021), Grapevine's The Real Unreal (2023), Las Vegas' Omega Mart inside immersive entertainment venue AREA15 (2021), and Santa Fe's original House of Eternal Return (2016). The attraction also partnered with Elitch Gardens theme park to design Kaleidoscape (2019), a dark ride at the Denver facility.

CHRISTOPHER DEVARGAS

ABOVE: Visitors to Meow Wolf's Omega Mart in Las Vegas can step through a freezer into another dimension.

BELOW: Denver's Convergence Station encourages visitors to explore the hidden details found throughout a unique cityscape.

Crafting Creative Chasms

Like at a theme park, the guest journey is nonlinear inside Meow Wolf. Guests all start at the same entry point, then disseminate into different corners. Each exhibition opens as a familiar setting: Las Vegas resembles a convenience store; Grapevine appears as the exterior of a suburban home in Illinois; Santa Fe welcomes guests into an unassuming yet peculiar kitchen; and Denver has the appearance of a train station. As guests take a closer look, their perceptions of the world around them begin to warp.

"Through this unassuming doorway awaits the Real Unreal—a pocket dimension, a space between time where creation and imagination have met in warped reality," explains Connor Gray, public relations manager of the Grapevine attraction.

At his attraction, adults get on their knees to crawl into the fireplace, while kids scurry feet-first into a clothes dryer.

In Las Vegas, visitors disappear into a convenience store freezer case, while ducking into a camping tent on display sends explorers into a desert-like setting.

JESS BERNSTEIN

SCOTT FAIS

"People can explore and interpret what they see—just like any kind of art."

– Connor Gray, public relations manager, Grapevine

At Meow Wolf facilities, visitors find non-traditional galleries of all sizes in interconnected worlds. Pieces of art may appear in the open or behind closed cabinet doors designed to be opened. Tolosa calls this the "dynamic interplay between art and entertainment."

The overall effect is convincing. Getting lost in a Meow Wolf facility is encouraged, according to Schwartz, who admits that becoming lost can even happen to staff members.

"I happened upon a room that I had never been in before—and I had been on-site at that point for six months," she tells Funworld. "I realized this is what our guests are going to experience; they're going to come back and be like, 'I've never seen this room before!'"

While some dioramas are located behind glass, no art installation is behind a velvet rope.

"When you're encouraging people to touch and slap and smack things around, things are going to get a little worn out. So, we have a full exhibitions team that comes in every single morning to touch up the space," explains Gray. That includes everything from printing new paper props, like faux newspaper articles, to painting scuff marks. While constantly performing maintenance is currently a necessity, the operator routinely holds internal conversations on whether continued upkeep or replacement with stronger materials makes more sense.

MEOW WOLF

"We believe that if we drive imagination, we reignite the power of creativity in humans."

– Jose Tolosa, CEO, Meow Wolf

"We've said, 'We probably need to find a better solution because [the exhibits] see a lot of traffic and a lot of issues,'" reveals Caldwell in Las Vegas. "But, if we can continue to make space for amazing materials … fragility—just like art—is a beautiful, authentic expression. And we're going to try to preserve that wherever possible."

Creative Values

Meow Wolf maintains five guiding pillars of inclusion that their employees follow. The attraction promotes these on their website as a testament to their value system. They include:

Creative Collaboration
We believe the act of celebrating together amplifies possibilities.

Proactive Playfulness
We celebrate the unexpected because it is the doorway to discovery.

Outsiders Welcome
We are all outsiders at heart, and so we create space for everyone to feel like they belong.

Authentic Compassion
We are "kind punks"—supportive to each other and standing up for what we believe in.

Audacious Courage
We have the courage to radically reinvent ourselves and push the boundaries of art.

CHRISTOPHER DEVARGAS

Merchandise as an Attraction

Ask Caldwell in Las Vegas what he wanted to be when he grew up, and the answer is immediate.

"A Power Ranger. I was always drawing a lot and flipping a lot," he says. A love of gymnastics led to an early career as an acrobat with Cirque du Soleil's "Mystère" show. Today, he blends his passion for fine arts as Omega Mart's creative director, where he is responsible for art and merchandise.

More than 100 tangible products are on the shelves and for sale at Omega Mart, just like a real convenience store.

"It's very important that our products—like our art—do have that subversive element to them," he says.

From aluminum food cans wrapped in a label proclaiming a tattooed chicken awaits inside to a sprayable cleaning solution that appears to be liquid butter, some of the eccentric products have practical uses.

"I think, as America's most exceptional grocery store, we have a mandate to always be at the cutting edge of giving customers what they don't even know they want," Caldwell says.

ABOVE: Omega Mart offers eclectic products that visitors can purchase from the shelves as merchandise.

BELOW: A Shrimp restocks Mammoth Chunks.

CHRISTOPHER DEVARGAS

JESS BERNSTEIN

CHRISTOPHER DEVARGAS

ABOVE: A hidden portal disguised as a filing cabinet leads into the fictious offices of Dramcorp at Omega Mart in Las Vegas.

BELOW: A treehouse inside The Real Unreal in Texas can accommodate guests using a wheelchair.

SCOTT FAIS

"Finding a way to show employees the culture—and then also how they can find themselves in that role—is something that keeps people around."

-Kelly Schwartz, general manager, Grapevine

The Muscle Fresh Toothpaste box promises "clean teeth and sick abs." Inside awaits a real miniature-sized tube of toothpaste.

"We find white label opportunities that are willing to work with us because we're emulating a big box store, but we're not always ordering large quantities," Caldwell says. "We literally use retail as an element to this art mechanism."

The tactic works. Caldwell says the average length of stay at the Las Vegas location is two to three hours. For adults, The Datamosh Bar is tucked away inside the exhibition and features cocktails composed of unique flavors.

Producing Shrimp (aka Human Resources)

Ambassador. Associate. Cast Member. Team Member. Model Citizen. The attractions industry has many names for frontline employees. Meow Wolf's creative nomenclature? "Our employees are called 'Shrimps!'" explains Schwartz, sharing that the title of Shrimp dates back to Meow Wolf's original founders. "It's a badge that we carry with pride, and we have a ton of fun with it."

That extends to team meetings known as "shrimp cocktails." Grapevine's employee of the year award is also appropriately named, "Shrimp-ly the Best." (A trophy created by the exhibition and facilities teams is adorned with shrimp.)

Schwartz also had a lot of fun with her initial hiring event.

"How are we going to show up?" she asked. The answer? A neon rodeo.

"We were at one of the local Grapevine hotels using one of their ballrooms, but we completely made it over—into a Meow Wolf, which was awesome," she recalls. "We were all dressed up to the nines in neon."

The interview process Schwartz used was anything but ordinary. Potential Shrimps were asked to play games, display teamwork abilities, and answer questions.

"It was rad. No joke, I think we even wowed the people who came. It gave them that high energy feeling," she says about the creative employment process. The onboarding process before opening took on a train theme. "It was like, 'Choo choo, all aboard!'" she says.

KATE RUSSELL

SCOTT FAIS

"I love that we balanced our existence as an art exhibit with our existence as a functioning retail store. It's so unique and so special."

-Kent Caldwell, creative director, Las Vegas

Developing Employees, Guests, and Communities

Now a general manager, Schwartz began her attractions industry career in 2005 at Legoland California in public relations, rising through the ranks under retired Merlin Entertainments CEO Nick Varney.

"I think I'm really lucky that I've grown up in this industry. And I think I was really lucky that I grew up working for Merlin and having the leadership that I had," Schwartz says.

Today, she is dedicated to developing the next generation of attractions industry leaders.

"What keeps me up at night is probably knowing that our goal is to ensure that whether their future is with Meow Wolf—or not—that they're getting the skills and the development they need to go have the career that they want," she says.

Her aim aligns with CEO Tolosa's own vision for Meow Wolf.

"Our mission is to open portals and policymaking for visitors for the communities in which we operate—and certainly also for employees," Tolosa says.

Knowing the experience could become overwhelming for autistic and sensory-sensitive guests, all company-owned Meow Wolf locations received accreditation as Certified Autism Centers by the International Board of Credentialing and Continuing Education Standards (IBCCES). Sensory tool kits, which include noise-limiting headphones, are available at check-in.

In the meantime, a smartphone app named Aira allows the visually impaired to connect with Meow Wolf's environments through a live interpreter at no charge. Using a smartphone camera and a live connection, interpreters will verbally describe surroundings and the artwork for a guest with vision loss.

In addition, each location is ADA accessible. In Grapevine, that includes an elevated treehouse.

"The artist here had to build out the treehouse, making sure the space was fully widened to accommodate a wheelchair," explains Gray, where a nearby elevator features art displays inside the passenger cab.

Following their commitment to support their local markets, Meow Wolf commissions in-market artists whenever possible. The new Houston exhibition includes installations from more than 50 local artists.

Like the end of a film, the attraction's website provides a credit roll naming each artist involved in creating art for an exhibition.

"We want people to come curious and leave knowing that they experienced something that changes their perception of art because it's more accessible … their perception of inclusivity because they've seen all the amazing people that come here—and that work here," Schwartz concludes with a confident smile. FW

CHRISTOPHER DEVARGAS

The Wolf Howls into Houston and Hollywood

Meow Wolf adds second Texas location and Los Angeles as newest markets

by Scott Fais

Meow Wolf plans to open portals in Houston and Hollywood as its next two markets. Currently in expansion mode, the "hard to describe, [but] easy to enjoy" (Meow Wolf's own slogan) attraction is at work to open its fifth and sixth exhibitions.

"For years, we've made trips to Los Angeles, dreaming of creating something in its layered and ever-changing network of creativity," says Sean Di Ianni, co-founder of Meow Wolf and senior creative director of Meow Wolf Los Angeles. "L.A. is more than a physical place; it extends deep into the global landscape of human imagination, constantly pushing its own bounds."

Di Ianni hints the Los Angeles location will incorporate a cinematic theme together with what a press release calls "cinematic mythos, mysterious eggs, absurd glitz, and the fantastical spells cast by Hollywood." In addition, connections to the storylines found at existing Meow Wolf attractions will bubble up in an overarching narrative.

"We want it to be a part of the city's ongoing narrative of growth," says Jose Tolosa, CEO of Meow Wolf. The Los Angeles location will take up residency in a preexisting movie theater near the well-traveled Interstate 5 freeway later this decade.

Currently, the Art Team Task Force and Meow Wolf's Artist Development and Production team are on-site in Houston's Fifth Ward. At press time, 60 full-time professional installation artists are at work to open the Houston location later this year.

Scott Fais is the director of global editorial at IAAPA. The six-time Emmy Award-winning journalist enjoys visiting creative attractions of all kinds—and meeting the professionals behind them. Connect with him on LinkedIn:

HAUTE CUISINE

How attractions ensure creative F&B enhances their message—and the guest experience

by Corrie Pelc

WHILE MUSEUMS, AQUARIUMS, AND OTHER EDUCATIONALLY FOCUSED ATTRACTIONS are known for their exhibits and programs, many have made a name for themselves with distinguished dining programs.

Focusing on sustainability, using locally sourced ingredients, meeting special dietary needs, and celebrating cultural cuisines are some ways in which the restaurants and cafes at attractions around the globe are using dining experiences to differentiate themselves.

Funworld offers a look at how six have developed world-class culinary experiences for their visitors.

MONTEREY BAY AQUARIUM

Perched above the Pacific Ocean, the dining experience focuses on telling stories through food at the Monterey Bay Aquarium in Monterey, California, says Executive Chef Matthew Beaudin. "From a culinary perspective, we hope to share the stories of the farmers, fishermen, and ranchers who make it possible for us to create the magic we do," he explains.

Sustainability is also at the core of their food services, Beaudin says, which includes eliminating all plastic from the service area of the restaurant and working with suppliers to eliminate plastic, cardboard, and packing foam in deliveries. "As more and more information becomes available regarding microplastics and pollutants in the supply chain, we are increasingly looking for solutions ... the best first step is to begin asking questions and see where you can align with your partners and find synergies for sustainability," says Beaudin. Thus, deliveries arrive using reusable plastic crates. "Engaging with local vendors and working with Seafood Watch to identify green Best Choice seafood helps us drive the broader message of sustainability to guests and be a steward of the environment and conservation efforts," he adds. The green Best Choice designation comes from Seafood Watch's sustainable seafood advisory list—which is created and used by the Monterey Bay Aquarium to mitigate the environmental impact of seafood consumption.

The Monterey Bay Aquarium also extends its sustainable efforts to its waste. Vice President of Sales John Abrahamson explains, "We are extremely conscientious of our waste. We do not have any trash cans available to guests. Our cafe staff hand-sorts all waste to ensure that it is properly categorized. We also do quarterly, aquarium-wide trash audits that are initiated and led by our senior sustainability program manager."

MONTEREY BAY AQUARIUM

TWO OCEANS AQUARIUM

Meeting sustainability requirements was a non-negotiable term for Two Oceans Aquarium in Cape Town, South Africa, when senior management decided to seek an outside restaurant operator to manage its restaurant, explains Guest Experience Manager Alichia Nortje.

"The aquarium included sustainability principles in our lease agreement, which addressed waste management, energy and water consumption, procurement principles, and a strict view

ABOVE: The Monterey Bay Aquarium eliminated all plastic from its food service program.

BELOW: The restaurant at the Two Oceans Aquarium in South Africa has sustainability principles in its lease agreement.

TWO OCEANS AQUARIUM

RIGHT: The Victoria and Albert Museum designs menus that are inspired by exhibitions and match the atmosphere of the attraction.

BELOW: Ocean Park Hong Kong participates in Hong Kong's Eat Local program, using locally sourced ingredients.

VICTORIA & ALBERT MUSEUM

on single-use plastic with specific emphasis on banning the use of plastic straws," she says. "We pride ourselves on providing excellent customer care throughout the visitor journey, and at every touch point, we wanted to align with a restaurant operator that could support our service standards."

For aquariums or museums considering outsourcing their restaurant, Nortje says to remember there isn't a one-size-fits-all solution. "Attractions will need to carefully consider the benefits, challenges, and costs associated with each," she adds. "By the time we decided to outsource our restaurant service, we had tried several options over a period of time, allowing us the opportunity to measure the success and draw sufficient insight into its effectiveness."

OCEAN PARK HONG KONG

VICTORIA & ALBERT MUSEUM

At the Victoria & Albert Museum in London, visitors can find several dining spaces focused on different needs, from a full lunch to patisserie items and coffee, says Gianmaria Baldassarre, operations manager of public spaces for Benugo, the catering contract partner for the museum.

"We work in partnership whenever possible to design menus inspired by exhibitions and working with the visitors in mind, as well as responding to trends but keeping a differentiated touch with hero dishes and items such as scones, Victoria spongecake, and pies," he details.

As guests increasingly expect dining services to cater to food allergies or other dietary needs and preferences, Baldassarre says the team strives to develop menus that consider common dietary restrictions, with gluten-free, vegan, and vegetarian dishes available, along with a limited choice of red meat.

"We follow all relevant regulations in terms of allergies, but as with any catering serving a variety of food, there is the possibility of contamination," he continues. "We recommend our guests to talk to our staff about their requirements so that we can cater for their needs with peace of mind."

OCEAN PARK HONG KONG

Visitors to Ocean Park Hong Kong can explore diverse culinary experiences and dishes within seven themed locations, including Neptune's Restaurant. The space immerses guests in a deep-sea world featuring 5,000 fish from more than 400 species swimming in a colossal aquarium. Meantime, Tuxedos Restaurant in the South Pole Spectacular themed realm provides panoramic penguin views.

"Ocean Park Hong Kong is committed to conservation and education," says Ivan Wong, chief executive of Ocean Park Corporation. "Our food and beverage offerings are a vital part of this mission. We want to raise environmental awareness through delicious cuisine and a memorable experience."

In addition to a focus on sustainable dining, Ocean Park also advocates for Hong Kong's Eat Local movement by using locally sourced ingredients. "This reduces the park's environmental impacts and supports biodiversity by reducing packaging and transportation emissions," Wong says. "Neptune's Restaurant, at the forefront of this initiative, features talented chefs who consistently impress visitors with delectable dishes that highlight the flavors of local ingredients. Through their culinary creations, they aim to reshape visitors' perspectives on embracing a low-carbon lifestyle."

POLYNESIAN CULTURAL CENTER

The Polynesian Cultural Center in Laie, Hawaii, on O'ahu, offers a distinctive dining experience that celebrates the rich cultures and cuisines of the Pacific Islands. "Our dining services are centered around Polynesian-inspired dishes, highlighting traditional recipes and flavors from Polynesian island nations and Pacific Rim countries that have influenced Hawaii's culinary landscape," Executive Chef Felix Tai says.

Through the Center's Ali'i Lū'au and Gateway Buffet, Tai says there's no better way to share aloha than through food. "Food is culture, and food is love, forming a profound connection between authenticity and cultural heritage," he continues. "While rooted in tradition, our approach is chef-driven, blending traditional flavors with modern techniques to offer our guests a dining experience that is both authentic and innovative—unique to the Polynesian Cultural Center.

"My advice for any organization looking to enhance their food offerings is to embrace their culture authentically. Knowing who you are and owning it cultivates authenticity, fosters growth, and drives positive change."

AQUARIO

The three food stations located throughout AquaRio in Rio de Janeiro are part of the aquarium's main pillars of creating a successful visitor experience, says Adelio Demeterko, operations director of Cataratas Group for AquaRio.

"The options on the aquarium's menu are practical and tasty," he explains. "The menu is constantly revised, and new dishes are added. In the beginning, the aquarium [started] with snacks like pizzas and popcorn. Today, [it] is possible to find a complete lunch option with starters, main dishes, and desserts."

Demeterko says they also offer healthy options and Brazilian cuisine classics, such as picadinho de carne (a chopped meat dish) and brigadeiro—a famous sweet popular in Brazil—a kind of chocolate truffle, açaí, and cheese bread.

"Good food is also part [of] the visitor experience," he continues. "That's why [it] is important to invest in menus that value a local cuisine and the origin that comes from a good local producer. Above all, invest in packaging recycling because it's important for the conservation of marine biodiversity." FW

POLYNESIAN CULTURAL CENTER

AQUARIO

ABOVE: The Polynesian Cultural Center authentically embraces regional culture in its menu items.

BELOW: AquaRio's three food stations provide a variety of options for guests with diverse preferences and needs.

Woof It Up!

How water parks and community pools provide a paws-itive end-of-season experience for dogs and their owners

by Corrie Pelc

RESEARCH RECENTLY COMPILED BY DOGSTER, a dog-focused online publication, found that pet parents in the United States spent $109.6 billion on their furry friends in 2021, the European Union spent an estimated €21.2 billion in 2020, and China rang up $31.89 billion in 2020.

A dog safely enjoys Wild Waves Theme and Water Park in a fitted life jacket.

WILD WAVES THEME AND WATER PARK

Some savvy water parks and community pools across the globe are leveraging dog owners' willingness to spend money on their pups by holding dog-only events as their seasons come to a close.

Funworld tapped water parks, community pools, and dog resorts for their tips on how to hold successful end-of-season events for guests' beloved furry friends.

Dogs Down Under

Several community pools throughout Australia hold dog-only events at the end of their season. One of these is Ballarat Aquatic & Lifestyle Centre in Ballarat, Victoria, Australia, which started hosting a Dog Day in 2023.

"With many dog lovers in Ballarat, it was a great way to utilize our facility in a diverse way that could potentially reach a target market that might not have visited before," says Gerald Dixon, manager of aquatic and leisure services for the city of Ballarat. "The event marks the end of the outdoor pool season before the pool is closed to the public for winter, so there was no risk to the quality of water" Dixon says.

Belgravia Leisure, which manages more than 160 swimming pools across Australia and New Zealand, will also host end-of-season dog events at some of its community pools. "The pool is put into hibernation at the end of the season, so it's the perfect time to host an event like this," says Darren Allen, area manager for Belgravia Leisure. "We no longer need to keep [the pool] in regulations after it closes, so the dogs don't impact operations. Fur babies are becoming a genuine member of the family these days, so owners love it."

Fetching Funds for Local Animal Charities

The annual Doggie Dip at Splish Splash Water Park in Calverton, New York, raises funds for a local animal shelter. "We also invite the shelter to set up at the event," Director of Marketing Danielle Trombetta says. "Typically, they bring information on the organization and have one to two dogs that are currently up for adoption."

Similarly, Ocean Breeze Waterpark in Virginia Beach, Virginia, partners with a local dog rescue for its annual Pup Party. "The event is a fundraiser for them," explains Myra Wood, director of marketing and sales for Ocean Breeze Waterpark. "There are actually dogs that are here that day, and there are adoptions that happen."

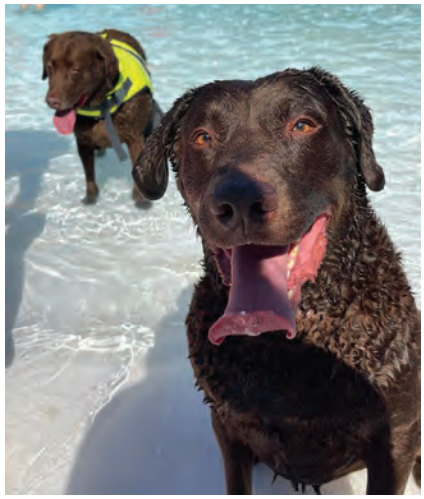
Hawaiian Waters The Colony, a water park in Colony, Texas, hosts Bow Wow Luau, an event benefiting a local animal non-profit, while Wags and Waves at Hawaiian Waters Garland in Garland, Texas, raises money for several rescue groups in the local area, says Group Sales Manager Christy Myers.

"We sell tickets to [Wags and Waves] and then for an upcharge, the rescue group sells them to residents and guests," Myers explains. "They will bring in sponsors and line the street with pop-up tents and tables where people are selling treats, dog collars—everything dog-related."

A Paw-ty That Is Off the Leash

End-of-season dog events are not only enjoyable for dogs—many are designed to be fun for their owners as well.

OCEAN BREEZE WATERPARK



HAWAIIAN FALLS WATER PARK

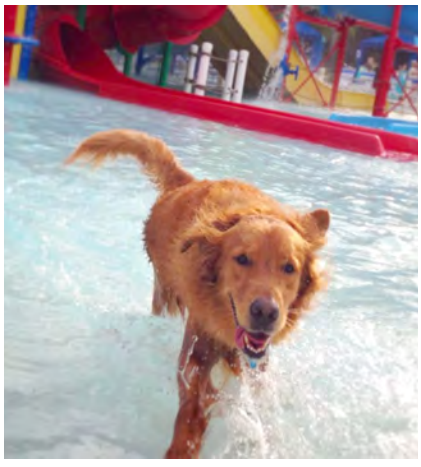
For example, for its annual Wags 'n Waves Dog Swim Day, Wild Waves Theme & Water Park in Federal Way, Washington, brings in local vendors and sponsors with dog merchandise. "Owners enjoyed shopping around and finding new treats and toys for their pets," Marketing and Sales Director Pam Bugbee tells Funworld. "It's fun to offer a unique, pet-friendly experience that is as fun for the owner as it is for their fur babies."

Will B. Morey, director of water parks at Morey's Piers and Water Parks in Wildwood, New Jersey, says its annual PigDog Puppapalooza also includes beach walks, which brings attention to their all-season, pet-friendly bar, appropriately named PigDog Beach Bar. "[The beach walk] starts and ends at our PigDog Beach Bar," Morey explains. "Some people aren't familiar with that, and they realize that it's dog-friendly all summer long, so they can bring their pups there and get something to eat, drink, and relax."

BALLARAT AQUATIC & LIFESTYLE CENTRE

MOREY'S PIERS

SCOTT FAIS



HAWAIIAN FALLS WATER PARK

THE WAGINGTON

Pups of all sizes enjoy swimming, wading, and sunning themselves at water parks with their human companions.

Staff Works Their Tails Off

While some report their end-of-season dog events are their staff's favorite workday, in some cases, the staff finds themselves working harder than they do during the season.

Myers says for their dog events at the Hawaiian Waters parks, they need more hands on deck than normal. "We have staff that kind of act as goalies, if you will, to make sure dogs don't run out," she details. "We tighten everything up quite a bit and use stanchions and different guarding so that we can make sure dogs don't escape."

Because they only want dogs to be in certain areas of the water park, Trombetta says staff preps for the event by barricading all areas of the park in which guests—and their pups—are not permitted to enter. "Additionally, we have lifeguards in the wave pool during the event to ensure the safety of all our guests and their four-legged friends," she adds.

Allen at Belgravia Leisure says the event's risk mitigation is based on two key elements—owners taking responsibility for their dogs and staff remaining vigilant about pool safety supervision. "Doggy Day is chaotic, but it's great to see patrons being alert and super aware of their surroundings," he adds. "Our staff is experienced in dealing with all sorts of situations."

While most employees may love having the water park go to the dogs for a day, Morey says it's important to remember that not everyone likes dogs. "Some people are afraid of dogs, so we want to make sure ... if they have any issues that we're conscious of that," he explains.

Safety Fur-st

In addition to staff, there are other clearances required for dogs to be admitted into many of the water parks.

To attend Wags 'n Waves Dog Swim Day, Bugbee says guests can bring up to two dogs, and proof of vaccinations are required for park entry. "Wild Waves verifies current vaccination records for all dogs attending the event, and we provide separate areas for large and small dogs that might need their own play space," she explains.

At Splish Splash Water Park, Trombetta says the facility created a liability waiver and release for all guests to sign prior to the event. "The waiver will confirm the guest/handler is 18 years of age or older, their dog is not aggressive or dangerous, and the guest can always control their dog and its behavior, and we require all vaccinations to be up to date, a rabies tag, collar, leash, and license to participate in the event," she details.

Owner Francis Higgins at The Wagington, a luxury pet hotel in Singapore, says to remember not all dog

breeds are good swimmers. "They are required to wear dog life jackets when at the pool," he says. "One must have very well-trained, attentive staff who are willing to jump in with dogs and a wide range of sizes of durable dog life jackets."

As an additional layer of safety, Morey's Piers structures its dog event so that there are five sessions throughout the day. "Breaking it up into sessions ... allows for there to be a certain amount of animals, but still we can try to keep up with demand to have enough capacity for them," Morey says.

Nothing to Be Sniffed At

Pools full of dogs mean lots of fur—along with other forms of waste. Developing a plan for how to handle contaminants is crucial in executing a successful and safe event.

Because the dog event is held after Wild Waves Theme & Water Park's last operating day, Bugbee says the pools are drained and cleaned immediately following the event. "Our guests are so kind and very careful to pick up after their fur babies," she continues. "We have pet stations around the park with doggie bags and cleaning supplies."

Dixon at Ballarat Aquatic & Lifestyle Centre says the pool at their Eureka facility is drained and cleaned before the start of the summer season. "You need to remember that humans have hair, too, and on hot days, we can have close to 2,000 swimmers attend Eureka," he adds. "Our water quality management system is well equipped to deal with regular humans and the 50 or so dogs who attend for a couple of hours."

At Morey's Piers, the team has found that dogs do not normally relieve themselves in the water. "It's really on the deck, and we just expect them to go on the deck," Morey explains. "We're handing out bags and we have teams with bleach, hoses, gloves, and scrubbers ready to go so we can clean things up pretty quickly."

An Un-fur-gettable Experience

While there is work involved with holding pool fun just for dogs, those who have organized the events agree it is well worth the effort.

"[It's a great] food and beverage opportunity for us at the end of the season, and it's that one last chance to blow out any merchandise that you don't want to hold over in the offseason," Wood says.

"A lot of the guests who ... bring in their dogs don't have kids, so they would not come to the water park otherwise, so it's a chance to get our name out a little bit more," Myers points out.

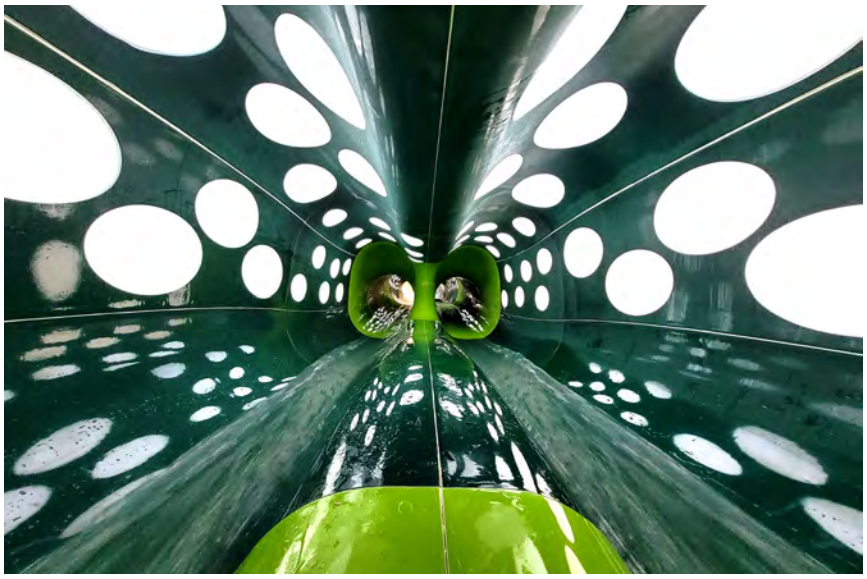
"It's always really nice to be able to ... use our platform and our venue to try to benefit an organization that's trying to do good things in the community," Morey says. "It's certainly a win-win when you get the public that comes in—and is happy to have a good time and happy that the money they're spending is going not just for their good time, but also to a good cause." FW

SPLISH SPLASH WATER PARK

Two huskies cool off in the water at Splish Splash Waterpark.

Corrie Pelc is a journalist with a quarter century of writing experience, reporting for both consumer and trade publications. In addition to IAAPA News publications, she also writes for Rinksider Magazine, International Bowling Industry Magazine, and MedicalNewsToday.com. Connect with her on LinkedIn.

SCHLITTERBAHN GALVESTON



The Massiv Monster Blaster not only looks impressive, its special pump system also reduces Schlitterbahn Waterpark Galveston's operational costs.

One Speed Does Not Fit All

Exploring the use of variable speed systems in water parks

by Michael Switow

AT SCHLITTERBAHN WATERPARK ON GALVESTON ISLAND outside Houston, parkgoers love the 81-foot-tall Massiv Monster Blaster, which twists, turns, and drops for more than 900 feet. Not only is the slide fun—the attraction from WhiteWater also leverages energy-efficient technology that reduces the park's carbon footprint and lowers utility bills.

Traditionally, the jets that power guests uphill on rides like the Massiv Monster Blaster run continuously and pump water nonstop. In an attempt to reduce the jets' impact, WhiteWater introduced an energy-saving proprietary algorithm and leveraged readily available variable frequency drives (VFDs) to dynamically adjust pump speeds while the ride is in operation. This Smart Blast reduces power consumption by more than 50%.

"The new system saves significant power by only ramping up motor speed when it's needed to drive riders uphill," says WhiteWater Product Systems Manager Kelly Williams. "It also reduces the wear and tear on the mechanical equipment and is more energy efficient because the motor is not constantly running at a set maximum speed."

WhiteWater's Smart Blast is a proprietary system for specific rides. The innovation won an IAAPA Brass Ring Award for Best New Product Technology Applied to Amusements in 2016. But the underlying technology—VFDs and their sister product, variable speed pumps (VSPs)—are off-the-shelf systems that any attraction can use to reduce energy and water consumption. They can be installed on new purchases, retrofitted for older slides, and installed in wave pools.

"Variable speed pumps and variable frequency drives offer a transformative approach to energy efficiency and sustainability," emphasizes ProSlide Director of Product Development Dan Thomas. "Investing in VSPs or VFDs saves costs and demonstrates a commitment to environmental stewardship and responsible resource management."

Saving Money Is Green

Most waterslide systems pump water at a fixed speed. "You can only throttle the outlet," says Williams. Some parks install butterfly valves to restrict water flow, but Williams likens this to "stepping on the gas pedal and the brake at the same time."

VFDs and VSPs, in contrast, rely on magnets that are fixed to a rotor to generate a constant magnetic field. They adjust motor speed to match demand and enable precise control over equipment operation.

"You get the benefits of an AC (alternating current) motor in terms of power density and reliability, plus the benefits of a DC (direct current) motor by being able to change the speed," Williams explains. "This results in massive power savings over the useable life of the attraction."

Variable speed systems offer several additional benefits as well. They are quieter and help manage peak energy demand by reducing sudden spikes in power consumption. Parts and systems also last longer because there is less pressure on seals, lower motor torque, and less current. The pumps themselves wear out less quickly because they push against less resistance. Additionally, there is less heat and fewer greenhouse gases.

"Operating at lower speeds reduces stress on pump components, extending their lifespan and reducing maintenance needs," explains Thomas. "VSPs can also help regulate water flow more efficiently, reducing wastage and promoting sustainable water use."

"VFDs are retrofittable on nearly every product, from every supplier, with an

immediate power reduction," says Williams. "By looking at ways to implement new technology on older slides, parks can find opportunities to reduce electricity usage through eliminating throttle valves. Going one step further, parks can reduce their consumption of water through spinning down a pump to minimum flow when the attraction is idle and waiting for riders."

Water Hammers

One potential drawback of installing VFDs is that pressure surges can occur when a single pump is used to supply water to multiple nozzles, injectors, or toys. If any one of the water outlets is abruptly turned off or slowed down significantly, air enters the system. When turned back on again, a pressure shock wave, or "water hammer," can occur when water reaches the outlet again and air leaves the system. This can lead to fractured pipes and damaged seals.

"VFDs are still useful in shared applications," explains Williams. "But this limits their value because the water must keep flowing through every outlet. This is why we tend to recommend one pump per nozzle on higher-output applications."

Capital Expenditure

Like many green investments—from fuel-efficient filters to refractive roof coatings—the biggest drawback to variable speed systems is often the initial cost, which can be significantly higher than traditional fixed speed pumps.

Over time, though, attractions that invest in green technology reap savings. In the case of variable speed systems, quantifying these savings depends on several factors, including the size of the pumps, operational hours, tower height, and cost per kilowatt-hour where the water attraction is located.

The case for installing variable speed systems in wave and surf pools may be even stronger. In these attractions pumps channel compressed air into a wave chamber to push the water down and create wave patterns. "You don't need the pump to be running flat out," says Williams, though this is the norm in pools that do not have variable speed systems. "With a VFD and a control system, you can carve it way back. It's an immediate power savings. You will notice a significant reduction in your first power bill."

"I've lost count of how many times clients have told me, 'I can't believe we didn't do this sooner!'" says now-retired WhiteWater mechatronics engineer Keith Campden. "There's a very compelling case to retrofit wave pools with VFDs."

Despite these savings, purchasing teams may be reluctant to increase capital expenditure. The same is not true for operations teams. They are often responsible for recurring costs and, thus, more likely to take a different view. For this reason, Williams advises that both operations and purchasing teams be in the same room when making major buying decisions. FW

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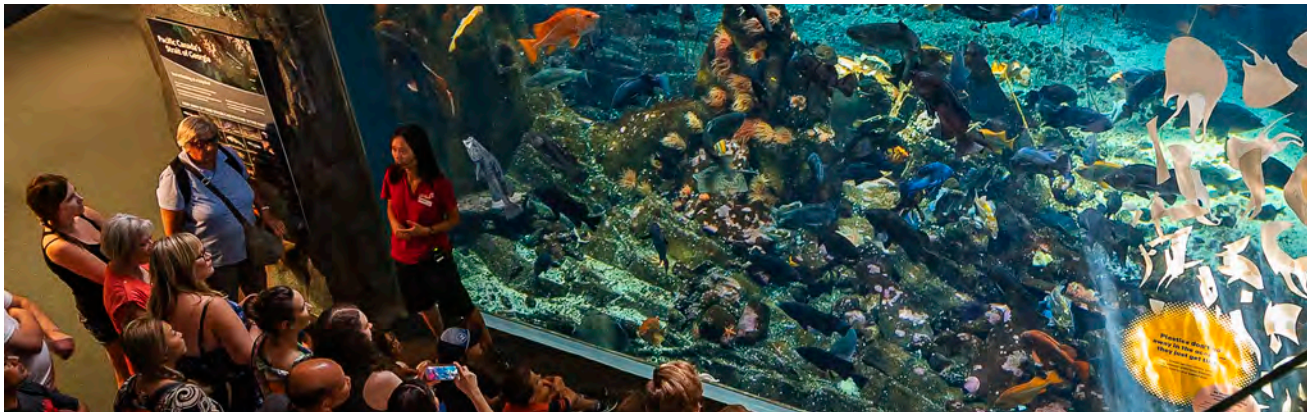


VANCOUVER AQUARIUM

Steps to Stronger and More Sustainable Purchasing Power

How committing to sustainable procurement can benefit attractions, people, and the planet

by Juliana Gilling

USING SUSTAINABLE PROCUREMENT METHODS presents a valuable opportunity to make a positive difference in the world. Attractions that use their collective buying power to support sustainability and social values can inspire change, causing a ripple effect through their supply chains and audiences. With greater frequency, the global attractions industry has adopted smart procurement strategies to help businesses thrive.

Mission Possible

Sustainable procurement embeds principles that promote the protection of the environment and society into an organization's processes and decisions. The international standard ISO 20400:2017 defines this as "procurement that has the most positive environmental, social, and economic impacts possible over the entire life cycle." The United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals reflect the need for sustainable consumption and production as well.

In addition to the environmental and social benefits, companies practicing sustainable procurement may see improved supplier relations, long-term cost savings, and greater appreciation among employees and consumers.

Attractions can start by examining where they spend their money. Once they know where they spend the most, where waste occurs, and which areas have the highest environmental impact, they can choose their priorities and develop a realistic improvement plan. Questions to ask include:

- Where could changing suppliers and products have the most impact?
- Are team members part of the process and receive proper communication around sustainable changes?
- Is there potential to develop more innovative and sustainable products?
- Could facilities and manufacturers reduce, reuse, or recycle more?

Leading by Example

The Vancouver Aquarium has pioneered sustainable procurement practices since the early 2000s, setting standards around responsible sourcing and environmental stewardship. "It's a fundamental aspect of who we are and why we're a destination of choice for environmentally conscious individuals," Anthony Pratt, director of business operations at the aquarium, explains to Funworld. "We prioritize

ABOVE: A Vancouver Aquarium educator speaks to a crowd at the Strait of Georgia exhibit.

BELOW: A seal rests on the deck of the Vancouver Aquarium.

VANCOUVER AQUARIUM

WHITEWATER

WhiteWater aims to donate 1% of corporate profits annually to a water-based non-profit organization.

collaboration with our supply chains to ensure sustainable and responsible procurement practices that consider environmental, social, and ethical factors. This involves establishing clear expectations and guidelines for our suppliers regarding environmental impact, equality, diversity, inclusion, and human rights. We actively seek out suppliers who share our values and demonstrate a commitment to environmental stewardship and social responsibility."

The Vancouver Aquarium selects vendors offering sustainable seafood options, eco-friendly packaging, and products that minimize environmental impact throughout their life cycle. The facility partners with local businesses using a "shop local" philosophy and has taken steps to reduce its carbon footprint.

The purchasing department evaluates suppliers through a comprehensive and scored assessment questionnaire. Product suppliers are resurveyed every two years.

The Vancouver Aquarium found success with its eco-friendly plush line. "By partnering with suppliers committed to sustainability, we've created plush toys that delight our visitors and align with

The Supplier Side

Funworld spoke to a handful of manufacturers and suppliers about sustainable procurement. Leaders shared their insights on materials, processes, and decision making.

Kevin Murphy

Senior vice president of sales and business development, Kraftwerk Living Technologies GmbH:

"Audiovisual (AV) technology needs to be used wisely. Equipment choices can have a huge bearing on sustainability, efficiency, and energy bills. The sector needs to rethink and bring in the creative AV engineering team at the start of a project and not at the end."

Geoff Morrison

Founder and CEO, Concept i:

"Sustainability shapes every step of our design process, from master planning to facades, landscapes, attractions, lighting, and more. But the commercial nature of procurement inevitably challenges anything that costs more. It helps immensely to work with best in class, like-minded clients, such as Jeddah Central District (JCD) in Saudi Arabia. JCD's new coastal district in central Jeddah adheres to world-class sustainability standards. It minimizes its carbon footprint and sets global precedents for responsible development.

Our JCD Pier design meets the developer's demand for minimum coastal impact, environmentally friendly materials, energy efficiencies, inclusive mobility, active health, and socio-cultural engagement. Every aspect of the Pier is designed with the future in mind, underpinned by robust supplier, operator, and contractor screening."

Girish Jagajeevan

Marketing manager, CASY Engineering Consultancy:

"In sustainable procurement for amusement parks, every decision counts, from selecting materials that are durable, recyclable, or sourced sustainably to prioritizing energy-efficient designs. Conducting life-cycle assessments ensures the rides we work on have a positive impact from start to finish. By embracing certifications and supporting local suppliers, we're not just talking about sustainability; we're living it. Regular maintenance isn't just about safety; it's about sustainability, minimizing waste, and promoting longevity. Continuous improvement is critical. By choosing suppliers prioritizing sustainability, we're forging partnerships rooted in a shared commitment to the planet."

Una de Boer

Chief marketing officer, WhiteWater

"I have a checklist of three things I would ask clients: 1.) Ask suppliers to talk about sustainability and explain what they are doing. If everyone asked that, everyone would have to do it. 2.) Get a broader group of decision-makers at the table. Often, the operators—those living with a product—have valuable insights to add to the procurement process. Think long-term about the products you are buying. 3.) Ask your suppliers to help you explain to your guests how your choices have improved the park's sustainability."

our environmental values," Pratt says. "These toys are made from recycled materials, reducing the demand for new resources and minimizing waste. Our eco-friendly plush line has been a hit with visitors, demonstrating that sustainable procurement can be both environmentally responsible and commercially viable."

The aquarium's commitment to sustainability is also evident in its cafe, where visitors can enjoy locally sourced and sustainable meals on compostable plateware.

The aquarium shares its sustainability initiatives with guests through interpretive signage and displays. "Our focus on sustainable procurement enhances the visitor experience," says Pratt, who believes there's a long-term business case for sustainable procurement. "Investments in eco-friendly products and practices can lead to cost savings through reduced resource consumption, improved efficiency, and enhanced brand reputation."

Resources for Learning Together

London's Design Museum focused on cutting the environmental cost of exhibitions after its "Waste Age" exhibition. The museum compiled what its team learned and created an exhibition design guide to help with future decisions.

The Design Museum team considers factors including energy use, programming, the decisions it makes about exhibition content, how long exhibitions run and who it partners with, materials, how it constructs and de-constructs shows to increase reusability, transportation, waste, and how it communicates its sustainability efforts to guests. The guide is inherently a work in progress.

Merlin Entertainments is passionate about reducing its environmental impact and is building sustainability into its company goals. The operator expects suppliers to share those ambitions—and be forthcoming with their sustainability data.

Merlin publishes its carbon emissions report and will release a carbon management plan this summer.

Evolving Expectations

Progressive businesses must prepare for change. New financial regulation in the European Union means companies must have a solid sustainability plan to secure financing. Andreas Veilstrup Andersen, group CEO at Liseberg, thinks the new requirements will "transfer to the manufacturer and supplier community."

However, attraction operators, suppliers, and manufacturers don't have to reinvent the wheel. Pooling knowledge and best practices will help.

The World Association of Zoos and Aquariums' sustainability strategy provides examples of sustainable procurement, including Parque das Aves in Brazil, which sources local and organic products for its restaurants and animal feed.

In the United Kingdom, theater-makers have worked with (WAZA) sustainability experts on the "Theatre Green Book," and the nonprofit Julie's Bicycle has produced a sustainable procurement guide for arts and culture organizations.

Culturenut.com has created a global marketplace where museums and cultural institutions can recycle their idle assets by buying, selling, and exchanging them.

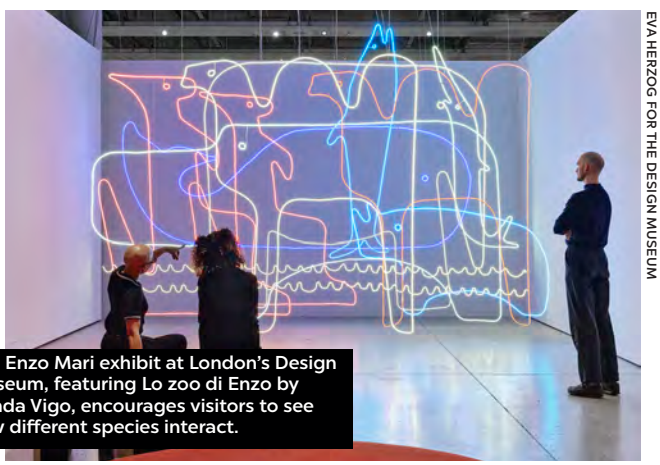
By aiming for sustainable procurement, the attractions industry can set a clear example and forge a path for others to follow. FW

Funworld Digital Examples

Scan QR code to download the Design Museum's environmental design guide.

Scan QR code to download Merlin Entertainments' Environmental Policy.

Scan QR code to download WAZA's sustainability strategy.



EVA HERZOG FOR THE DESIGN MUSEUM

The Enzo Mari exhibit at London's Design Museum, featuring Lo zoo di Enzo by Nanda Vigo, encourages visitors to see how different species interact.

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SECURE YOUR SPOT TODAY!

by Jakob Wahl

Anticipating Success This Season

AS ATTRACTIONS IN THE NORTHERN HEMISPHERE embrace the peak of their summer season, I am thrilled to offer insights into what promises to be an unforgettable year for travelers worldwide.

Let's reflect on the growth we anticipate in 2024 over last year at theme parks and amusement parks across IAAPA's multiple regions.

In North America, IAAPA expects a 2.0% boost, welcoming more than 300 million visits at parks this year alone. In Europe, we anticipate a 4.5% increase in attendance. In Asia-Pacific, expectations are for a 10.9% rise. The outlook in Latin America shows a 14.4% gain. And in the Middle East and Africa, a remarkable 21.5% increase in attendance is forecast for this year. This performance is detailed in IAAPA's 2023-2027 Global Theme and Amusement Park Outlook Report.

These encouraging attendance figures show how much people love our industry and how strong our communities are during these changing times. Moreover, consumer spending in North America increased by 7%, reaching an impressive figure of more than $32 billion according to IAAPA's 2023-2027 Global Theme and Amusement Park Outlook report. This substantial increase reflects a renewed enthusiasm for travel and leisure experiences, as individuals and families seek to create cherished memories and reconnect with the world around them.

Now, to the trends that define the attractions landscape in 2024.

One big trend we see is that there are more family entertainment options than ever before. From exciting thrills to immersive adventures, attractions are increasingly catering to the diverse interests of families.

Holiday World's Good Gravy family coaster opened in May, while SeaWorld Orlando's Penguin Trek is scheduled to open this summer. Mattel Adventure Park in Arizona will give just a glimpse into the array of experiences awaiting families in the months ahead.

Inclusivity lies at the heart of our industry's ethos, and this summer, we are witnessing a concerted effort to make attractions more accessible and welcoming to all.

The Hartman Family's attraction, Morgan's Wonderland in San Antonio, Texas, sets a shining example of this commitment. The 2023 IAAPA Hall of Fame inductees focus on creating an boundary-free environment where every guest can fully participate and enjoy the magic of the experience.

As the joy of discovery knows no age limit, we are delighted to see a surge in attractions tailored specifically for our youngest adventurers. Whether it's the imaginative realms of Legoland or the whimsical charm of Peppa Pig, destinations are embracing the opportunity to spark wonder and excitement in the hearts of young visitors. The Franklin Institute in Philadelphia stands out as a beacon of innovation, offering enriching experiences that captivate curious minds and inspire a lifelong love for learning.

Universal Studios Florida has developed several attractions aimed at younger children. The park opened the new DreamWorks Land this summer that comes on the heels of 2023's Illumination's Villain-Con Minion Blast. More attractions for children are planned to open next year at Universal Epic Universe with the How to Train Your Dragon – Isle of Berk land.

Nature's wonders also take center stage this summer as aquariums and zoos evolve to provide more immersive and authentic experiences. With a focus on greenery and natural habitats, destinations like the Virginia Aquarium with its recent expansionand SeaWorld Orlando's Corral Rescue Center both offer visitors behind-the-scenes views, allowing guests to forge deeper connections with the marvels of the natural world.

In closing, I extend my deepest gratitude to all the dedicated professionals who bring these visions to life, enhancing the lives of countless individuals and families around the globe. Together, let us make this season a safe one to remember, filled with joy, laughter, and the magic of exploration.

Jakob Wahl is the president and CEO of IAAPA. Connect with him on LinkedIn:

OUR PRODUCT IS NOT CLOSE TO ANYTHING CONSIDERED ‘SIMILAR’

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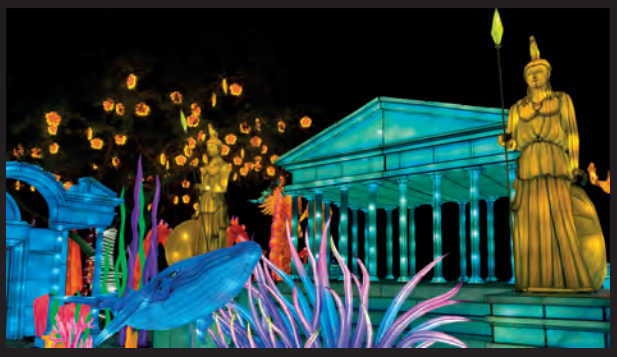

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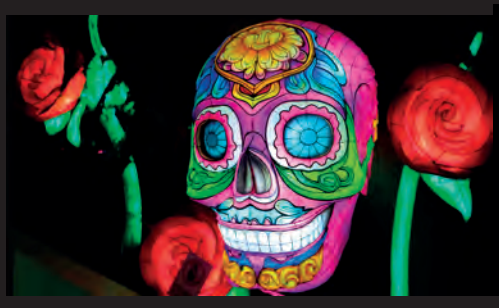

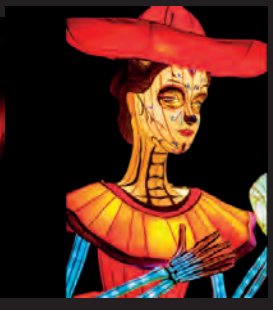

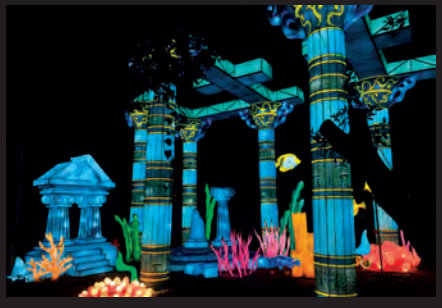

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